

**THE SECURITY OF JAPAN'S SEA LANES,  
1940-2003:  
“A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH”?**

Euan Somerled Graham

March 2003

A thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the  
Australian National University

**DECLARATION**

I declare that this thesis is the result of my original work

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of two stylized, cursive letters 'h' and 'h' followed by a horizontal line.

Euan Somerled Graham



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Professor Desmond Ball, of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, for his advice as supervisory chair, as well as the other members of my supervisory panel, Commodore Sam Bateman of the Centre for Maritime Studies at the University of Wollongong, New South Wales, and Professor Watanabe Akio, President of the Research Institute for Peace and Security (RIPS), in Tokyo, whose assistance in arranging interviews in Japan was especially helpful.

The support and constant encouragement of Dr Karl Claxton, of the Australian Attorney-General's Department, was invaluable throughout the long process of researching and writing the thesis. I also owe a special debt to Ann Snow and to my parents, Kenneth and Sheila Graham for their patience and diligence in proofing the final drafts.

Valuable assistance was provided by Dr Nikki Baker, of the Australian Defence Force Academy, Dr Jennifer Amyx of the University of Pennsylvania and Mr Paul Riseborough of King's College, London. I wish to thank Professor Sakanaka Tomohisa of RIPS, Dr Katahara Eichi of Kobe University, Professor Soeya Yoshihide of Keio University, Mr Yoshizaki Tomonori of the National Institute for Defence Studies and Mr Sam Jameson for volunteering their time and their insights into Japanese defence policy decision-making.

Admirals Sakonjo Naotoshi, also of RIPS, Hiramata Yoichi formerly of the National Defense Academy at Yokosuka, Kawamura Sumihiko, of the Okazaki Institute, and Akimoto Kazumine, of the Ship and Ocean Foundation, provided essential information and background regarding the Maritime Self Defense Forces' outlook on Japan's maritime security. Finally I would like to acknowledge the comradeship of Mr John McFarlane, Executive Director of the Australian member committee of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the security of Japan's sea lines of communication (SLOC) from the pre-war period to 2003. It is the first major study to address Japan's SLOC security concerns in a wide-ranging context, comprising economic policy, diplomacy, law enforcement, alliance relations and defence policy. However, the core interest of the study is in Japan's approach to military security and the impact that the vulnerability of Japan's sea lanes, as perceived by its decision-makers, has had upon strategy and defence policy.

The importance of SLOC to Japan's security since its industrialisation reflects a combination of the country's archipelagic geography, poor resource allocation and the large distances separating it from its primary suppliers of energy, raw materials and food. These unchanging fundamentals have ensured that Japanese policy-makers have consistently viewed the security of sea lanes as "a matter of life and death". Two questions drive the study. The first concerns how Japan's vulnerability to the disruption of its sea lanes has defined its perceived security imperatives and choices in defence and alliance policy since 1940. The second concerns how Japan's vulnerability to SLOC disruption has been used instrumentally, as a rationale to legitimise domestically and internationally controversial military activities in the post-1945 period.

During the Second World War, which Japan in large part entered in order to gain control of overseas natural resources, the country's latent vulnerability to naval blockade was exposed and military pressure applied to its SLOC helped to accelerate its defeat. In the post-war era of constitutional defence constraints, Japanese policy-makers' concerns about increased national vulnerability accruing from the vast expansion of Japan's overseas trade favoured the use of non-military responses, such as stock-piling and diplomacy aimed at securing cooperation from those coastal states astride its major seaborne supply routes. At the same time, concerns about the military aspects of SLOC security provided an impetus for forming an alliance with the United States in 1951 and for the establishment and incremental build-up of the Maritime Self Defense Forces (MSDF) since 1954. In the 1980s, 'sea lane defence' rose to the top of the agenda of bilateral defence cooperation with the United States, playing a major role in the modernisation of Japan's maritime defence capabilities and its deepening military integration within US strategy in the late Cold War period. While the rationale for sea lane defence disappeared with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Japan has faced both a

more disparate and more plausible set of challenges and potential threats to its SLOC from state- and non-state actors in the post-Cold War era.

This thesis argues that the strategic imperative of SLOC security, for economic, defence and foreign policy choices, has essentially remained constant for Japan throughout the period of study. This is despite the changes that have occurred to Japan's threat perceptions and the pronounced differences between post-1945 and pre-1945 approaches and attitudes to military security. It is further argued that the official emphasis in post-war defence policy on the vulnerability of SLOC and the role of the MSDF and alliance cooperation in securing maritime transportation can be fully accounted for only by understanding its instrumental use as a rationale to justify contentious aspects of military security.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Abstract	iv
Table of contents	vi
List of maps and figures	xi
Glossary	xii
 INTRODUCTION	 1
Background	1
Conceptual orientation of the study	2
Approach	4
Thesis structure	5
Research findings	9
 CHAPTER ONE: Japan's Maritime Trade and Trade Routes: an Empirical Analysis	 10
Introduction	10
I. Geographic overview	11
II. Economic overview	12
1. Resource dependence	14
2. Imports	17
i) Raw materials	19
ii) Mineral fuels	20
iii) Foodstuffs	22
iv) Manufactured products	23
v) Import partners	24
3. Exports	26
III. Maritime transportation and Japan	27
1. Merchant fleet	28
2. Shipping routes	30
2.1. Southeast Asian chokepoints	31
i) Straits of Malacca	32
ii) Sunda Strait	34
iii) Lombok-Makassar	35

iv) South China Sea	36
v) Ombai-Wetar	38
2.2. Middle Eastern chokepoints	39
Conclusion	41
CHAPTER TWO: Sea Lines in Strategy	43
Introduction	43
I. Principles of sea communications	44
II. The world wars	50
III. The Cold War	56
IV. Post-Cold War SLOC security	60
1. Sources of potential threat	66
i) Maritime sovereignty claims	66
ii) Terrorism-at-sea and piracy	69
iii) Regional conflicts	75
Conclusion	77
CHAPTER THREE: Japan's pre-1945 SLOC Security	80
Introduction	80
I. Maritime economic interests: Foreign trade and the merchant marine before 1945	82
i) 1859-1914	82
ii) 1914-1945	84
iii) Merchant fleet	86
II. Maritime strategic interests: The Imperial Navy, 1868-1945	89
Phase I: Birth to maturity, 1868-1905	89
Phase II: Uncertainty, austerity and expansionism, 1906-1936	92
Phase III: Oil -- life-blood for the Navy, 1937-45	100
III. The War of the <i>Maru</i>	106
IV. The inadequate protection of merchant shipping	110
Conclusion	118
CHAPTER FOUR: Japan's Sea Lane Security in the Era of Defence Constraints, 1945-77	120



Introduction	120
I. Analytical framework for Japan's post-war security policy	121
II. The Yoshida Doctrine	123
III. Naval renaissance	131
IV. Protection of maritime transport up to the Fourth Defense Build-up Plan	134
V. Autonomous defence and MSDF capabilities	137
i) Sekino's SLOC defence concept	140
ii) Kaihara's counter-view	145
VI. The Primacy of Constraints	147
VII. The National Defense Programme Outline ( <i>taikō</i> )	151
i) Maritime capabilities under the <i>taikō</i>	156
ii) Post- <i>taikō</i> maritime capabilities	157
VIII. Rising sea lane threat perceptions	159
Conclusion	163
 CHAPTER FIVE: Sea Lane Defence and Alliance Cooperation: 1977-90	 165
Introduction	165
I. Suzuki's sea lane defence 'pledge'	166
II. Shifts in US strategy	166
III. Japan's rising profile in US strategy	175
1. Military-strategic pressures	175
2. Political-economic pressures	177
3. 'Roles and Missions'	178
4. RIMPAC participation	181
IV. The Suzuki pledge and its aftermath	182
V. Japan's changing threat perceptions	186
VI. Nakasone and sea lane defence	193
VII. The Tanker War	199
Conclusion	200
 CHAPTER SIX: Japan's Sea Lane Diplomacy in Southeast Asia since the 1970s	 203
Introduction	203
I. Japan's diplomacy towards Southeast Asia	206
II. Japan and UNCLOS	208

III. The Straits of Malacca	210
IV. Japan's interests in the Straits of Malacca	211
1. The Traffic Separation Scheme and Under-Keel Clearance limit	217
2. A Kra canal?	222
V. Indonesia's archipelagic doctrine as a diplomatic challenge	224
1. Sea lane closures	226
2. Archipelagic sea lanes	227
VI. Nuclear shipments	229
Conclusion	231
 CHAPTER SEVEN: Japan's Post-Cold War SLOC Security: Piracy and Terrorism-at-Sea	 233
Introduction	233
I. Japan's Post-Cold War Defence and security	234
1. Defence policy review	237
2. Maritime threats and capabilities	239
3. Alliance factors	242
4. Japan's post-Cold War sea lane threat perceptions	244
II. Japan: piracy and terrorism-at-sea	248
1. Policy responses	253
i) Cooperation with coastal states	254
ii) Non-governmental responses	258
iii) International maritime organisations	260
2. The MSDF, piracy and maritime terrorism	261
i) Anti-terrorism and the MSDF's Arabian Sea deployment	262
Conclusion	266
 CHAPTER EIGHT: Japan's Post-Cold War SLOC Security: China and Regional Conflict	 268
Introduction	268
I. China's naval modernisation and maritime strategy	269
1. The role of SLOC in China's maritime strategy	271
2. PLAN Force modernisation	274
3. China's territorial claims and SLOC	276
4. Chinese perceptions of Japan's SLOC	279

II. Japanese perceptions of China's potential naval threat	280
III. North Korea's SLOC threat	293
Conclusion	296
CONCLUSION	298
I. SLOC as a strategic imperative	298
II. SLOC security as an instrumental policy concern	306
III. Japan's SLOC security prospects	309
APPENDICES	312
1. Breakdown of Japan's primary energy supply for selected years (%)	312
2. Major navigational concepts introduced under UNCLOS	312
3. Piracy incidents involving Japanese ships in the Straits of Malacca, 1994-2000	315
BIBLIOGRAPHY	318
Books and monographs	318
Book chapters, journal articles and conference papers	325
Official documents and reference sources	337
Newspapers, magazines and journals	338
Online resources	341
Interviews	342



## LIST OF MAPS AND FIGURES

### MAPS:

Map 1: Japan and surrounding straits	11
Map 2: The South China Sea and island groups	37
Map 3: Oil shipment routes and volumes through Maritime Southeast Asia	38
Map 4: Indian Ocean and Middle-East chokepoints	40
Map 5: Piracy incidents reported to the International Maritime Bureau in 2002	72
Map 6: JDA schematic for Marine Surface Defense, 1977	160
Map 7: The Sea of Okhotsk and the Northern Territories/Southern Kuriles	169
Map 8: Southeast Asia	205
Map 9: Indonesia (pre-October 1999) and surrounding seas	210
Map 10: The Traffic Separation Scheme in the Straits of Malacca	219
Map 11: Proposed route of the Kra Canal compared with the Straits of Malacca	222
Map 12: Indonesia's Archipelagic Sea Lanes	227
Map 13: Oceania and the 'second island chain'	272
Map 14: China's military regions	277

### FIGURES:

Figure 1: Japan's import dependence for fuels, minerals and foodstuffs	15
Figure 2: Breakdown of Japan's primary energy supply 1960-99	17
Figure 3: Breakdown of Japan's imports; percentage value by sector	18
Figure 4: Seaborne trade volumes for Japan and the world, 1998	19
Figure 5: Japan's non-ferrous metal stockpiles in tons	20
Figure 6: Japan's oil imports and consumption	21
Figure 7: Food imports and self-sufficiency rates	23
Figure 8: Japan's import partners by region	24
Figure 9: Japan's export markets by region	27
Figure 10: Japan's imports through Southeast Asian chokepoints	31
Figure 11: Japan's exports through Southeast Asian chokepoints	32
Figure 12: Sekino's optimal MSDF force structure	144
Figure 13: The Attached Table of the 1976 <i>taikō</i>	155
Figure 14: US force structure proposals at the 13th Security Subcommittee meeting	184
Figure 15: Force levels of the 1995 <i>taikō</i>	241

## GLOSSARY

AEW	Airborne Early Warning
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
APERC	Asia Pacific Energy Research Centre
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASDF	Air Self Defense Forces
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASF	Asian Ship Owners' Forum
ASL	Archipelagic sea lane
ASW	Anti-submarine warfare
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
CSCAP	Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific
DD	Destroyer
DE	Destroyer escort
DDG	Guided-missile destroyer
DDH	Helicopter-equipped destroyer
DoD	Department of Defense
DSP	Democratic Socialist Party
DWT	Deadweight tons
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
EU	European Union
FTA	Free Trade Area
FY	Financial Year (April 1-March 31 in Japan)
GAM	Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Free Aceh Movement)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
GRT	Gross registered tons
GSDF	Ground Self Defense Forces
ICBM	Inter-continental ballistic missile
IMB	International Maritime Bureau
IMCO	Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organisation
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
JCG	Japan Coast Guard
JCP	Japan Communist Party
JDA	Japan Defense Agency
JSA	Japan Shipping Association ( <i>nihon senshu kyōkai</i> )

LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
METI	Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoT	Ministry of Transport
MOX	Mixed-oxide
MSA	Maritime Safety Agency (former name of the Japan Coast Guard)
MSDF	Maritime Self Defense Forces
MTDP	Mid-Term Defence Program
MTDPE	Mid-Term Defense Program Estimate
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDC	National Defense Council
NCS	Naval Control of Shipping
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
nm	Nautical miles
NPRF	National Police Reserve Force
NSR	Northern Sea Route
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OPK	Ocean Peace-Keeping
OSPAR	Oil Spill Preparedness and Response
OTH	Over-the-Horizon (radar)
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PKO	Peace-keeping operations
RIMPAC	Rim of the Pacific Exercise
SAM	Surface-to-air missile
SDF	Self Defense Forces
SLBM	Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile
SLOC	Sea lines of communication
SOLAS	International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea
SOSUS	Sound surveillance sonar system
SSK	Diesel-powered attack submarine
SSBN	Nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine
SSM	Surface-to-surface missile
SSN	Nuclear-powered attack submarine
SURTASS	Surveillance Towed Array Sensor System

TEU	20-foot-equivalent unit
TSS	Traffic separation scheme
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea
ULCC	Ultra-Large Crude Carrier
VLCC	Very Large Crude Carrier
VTOL	Vertical Take-off and Landing

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the security of Japan's sea lines of communication (SLOC) from 1940 to 2003. It is the first study to do so in a comprehensive way. The thesis proposes and tests the claim that a focus on SLOC can offer particular insights into Japanese security imperatives and decisions in this period. It identifies significant imperatives defining policy continuity despite points of departure in Japan's overall security stance.

### Background.

Japanese officials and analysts have described the security of Japan's sea lanes as "a matter of life and death"<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, Japan has an obvious strategic interest in maintaining the safety of merchant traffic. First, Japan is an island nation and has been reliant on shipping to transport most bulk materials and manufactured goods in and out of the country since industrialisation in the late 19th century. Second, despite having the world's second-largest industrial economy and a population approaching 127 million, it possesses limited mineral resources and arable land. Import dependence is marked across a range of strategic commodities such as oil (99 per cent), iron ore (99 per cent) and copper (96 per cent). Many of its basic energy, raw material and food requirements must be met through imports, for which shipping remains the only commercially viable mode of transportation.

A combination of its archipelagic geography, poor resource allocation and the large distances separating it from its primary suppliers of energy, raw materials and food has accentuated the importance of shipping to Japan's security, despite its comparatively modest trade-to-GDP weighting. Japan depends particularly on sea lanes connecting it with the oil terminals in the Gulf, from which it draws nearly all its oil, and other shipping routes connecting it with mineral resources from the Indian Ocean basin, Australasia, Southeast Asia and North America. While 'self-help' economic policy measures such as stockpiling, austerity controls and substitution have the capacity to reduce the disruption caused by a halt to seaborne imports, any prolonged interruption of Japan's maritime transportation networks would undermine both industrial production and the government's ability to provide for the basic welfare of the population. Furthermore, in the event that Japan was threatened with military aggression, trans-

---

<sup>1</sup> For example, see Advisory Group on Defense Issues, *The Modality of the Security and Defense Capability of Japan*, Japanese Government Translation, GM:3338-, August 12, 1994, p 22; and Yoshida Manabu, 'Resources, Maritime Transport and SLOC Security', in Malcolm J Kennedy and Michael J. O'Connor, *Safely By Sea*, University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland, 1990, p 36; and Hayashizaki Chiaki:



Pacific SLOC would be vital to military reinforcement from the United States, which has retained forces in Japan since 1945.

#### Conceptual orientation of the study.

This thesis considers Japan's efforts to minimise its exposure to the threat of seaborne supply disruptions within a 'comprehensive security' context, connecting disparate policy fields such as trade relations, industrial policy, energy policy and diplomacy. However, the core research interest is in military security and the impact that the vulnerability of Japan's sea lanes, as perceived by its decision-makers, has had upon strategy and defence policy.

Specifically, the thesis seeks to answer:

- How has Japan's vulnerability to the disruption of its sea lanes defined its perceived security imperatives and choices in defence and alliance policy since 1940, particularly in terms of decision-makers' responses to changing strategic circumstances?
- How has Japan's vulnerability to SLOC disruption been used instrumentally, as a rationale to legitimise politically or constitutionally problematic military activities in the post-war period?

Two wider concerns inform these questions. The first is the influence which Japan's 'strategic geography' has had on decision-makers throughout the study period. Strategic geography, for the purposes of this thesis, is defined as the influence on a nation's defence and foreign policy, as well as its threat perceptions, resulting from its geographic location relative to the global distribution of resources and military capabilities.

Japan's security is usually approached in terms of the discontinuity between the pre- and post-1945 policy-making environment -- often thought of as a cultural shift -- as constitutional defence constraints and the orientation of national priorities towards mercantile goals replaced military government and an imperial security paradigm. The legacy of the pre-1945 period is normally approached in terms of Japan's ability "to face the issue of war responsibility" as the key political issue confronting its post-war

---

<sup>1</sup>'Retired Admiral on Post-Cold War MSDF Strategy', *Securitarian*, November 1996, pp 15-19, in FBIS-JST-96-053, November 1, 1996.

security policy, leading to its description as a “handicapped” state<sup>2</sup>. In my view, a disjunction between Japan’s pre-war and post-war political systems, security institutions and structures has obscured the fact that a significant *continuity* has been maintained, throughout the study period (including between its Cold War and post-Cold War phases), in the way that ‘strategic geography’ has shaped Japan’s decision-makers’ threat perceptions and strategic policy preferences.

The second concern pertains to Japan’s actual security policy decision-making process. The various individual and institutional domestic actors shaping post-war policy include the prime minister, cabinet, the Liberal Democratic Party and opposition parties, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), the Japan Defense Agency (JDA) and the uniformed officers of the SDF. In addition to domestic actors, the United States has also played a highly influential role in shaping Japan’s security affairs since 1945, both at the level of formal alliance linkages and through the close ties between the US and Japanese armed forces and ‘navy-to-navy’ relations in particular. The dynamics of this post-war decision-making process are identified via a framework presented in Chapter Four, which approaches policy at the three levels of Japan’s strategic interaction within the international system, domestic politics and alliance linkages. It is widely assumed that for most of the post-war period the US-Japan Alliance has functioned as a ‘prism’, filtering interaction between the systemic pressures and domestic constraints that define the parameters of Japan’s security policy. However, I argue in later chapters that strategic pressures in the form of uncertainty about the regional security environment, especially concerning China and North Korea, have led Japanese policy-makers to adopt a more independently ‘realist’ -- that is systemic, balance of power-based -- set of perceptions about potential security threats within Japan’s regional security environment than is commonly accepted. (This point is briefly developed further in the outline of Chapters Seven and Eight, below).

It is surprising no major English-language study of Japan’s sea lane security has appeared in the voluminous body of literature dedicated to Japan’s security and defence policy. Two Japanese books on sea lanes were published in the 1980s, when ‘sea lane defence’ rose to the top of the political agenda in US-Japan alliance relations, following Prime Minister Suzuki Zenkō’s May 1981 statement that Japan would undertake “to defend several hundred miles of surrounding waters and the sea lanes to a distance of 1,000 nautical miles”. Both of these texts concentrated on the issue of Japan’s

---

<sup>2</sup> Kosaka Masataka, ‘Diplomacy and Security in the Twenty-first Century’, *Japan Echo*, Winter 1996, p 6.

prospective role in defence cooperation with the United States during the 1980s, within a general discussion of the strategic aspects of Japan's import dependence<sup>3</sup>. James Auer's history of *Postwar Rearmament of Japanese Maritime Forces, 1945-71*, and Peter Woolley's *Japan's Navy: Politics and Paradox, 1971-2000*, provide a wealth of information on the Maritime Self Defense Forces (MSDF), Japan's *de facto* post-war navy, including the emphasis attached to defending sea lanes. Linton Wells' 1975 doctoral thesis explores Japan's maritime strategic interests on a broader footing, but on a more restricted time-scale<sup>4</sup>. The importance attached to securing a stable supply of natural resources within Japan's foreign and economic policies has also been highlighted, for example, in Chapman, Drifte and Gow's study of *Japan's Quest for Comprehensive Security*<sup>5</sup>. However, no academic study of significant length has been undertaken to assess how Japan's sea lane security relates to the broader context of defence policy or national strategy over successive periods -- wherein lies the original contribution of this thesis<sup>6</sup>.

#### Approach.

The thesis adopts a historical narrative approach as the method most suited to testing the hypothesis that long-term strategic continuity is demonstrable in Japanese security policy-makers' perceptions and responses, despite the post-war redefinition of domestic political institutions, structural economic change and fluidity in Japan's international systemic environment. However, the order of chapters is not merely chronological. In particular, Chapters One and Two are broader in scope and establish an empirical and theoretical context for the remaining six chapters dedicated to Japan's SLOC security which follow. Primary research material used in this thesis is drawn from Japanese and English-language documentary sources. I also conducted over 30 interviews in English and Japanese with officials and security analysts in Japan, Indonesia and Australia between 1999 and 2002. Field work in Japan was carried out with the support of a Japanese Ministry of Education research scholarship from October 1997 to March 1999, under the supervision of Professor Watanabe Akio, formerly of Aoyama Gakuin University and Professor Soeya Yoshihide of Keio University. I undertook a second research visit to Tokyo in February/March 2002, to update material to account for new

<sup>3</sup> Murai Shigeru, *Shiiren: Umi no Bōeisen* ('Sea Lanes: Defence Lines of the Sea'), NHK, Tokyo, 1983; and Oga, Ryōhei, *Shiiren no Himitsu* ('Sea Lane Secrets'), Shōbunsha, Tokyo, 1983.

<sup>4</sup> Linton Wells II, *The Sea and Japan's Strategic Interests 1975-1985*, John Hopkins University PhD thesis, Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1975.

<sup>5</sup> John W. M. Chapman, Reinhard Drifte, and Ian T. M. Gow, *Japan's Quest for Comprehensive Security: Defence, Diplomacy, Dependence*, Frances Pinter, London, 1983.

<sup>6</sup> Consideration of the above-mentioned texts and other secondary sources covering Japan's security and defence policies is integrated within the arguments developed within each separate chapter rather than in the form of a dedicated literature review.



developments in Japan's security policy since 1999<sup>7</sup>. Japanese names in the main body of the text are cited surname first, according to the Japanese convention. With the exception of personal names, vessel names, book, press and article titles Japanese terms cited in the text are italicised but not capitalised, except where cited in bibliographic references. While a comprehensive definition of SLOC is contained in Chapter Two, for the purposes of this study, 'sea lane security' and 'SLOC security' are used interchangeably. All dollar-figures quoted are in US dollars.

#### Thesis structure.

Chapters One and Two set the subsequent six chapters, dealing chronologically with Japan's SLOC security from 1940 to 2003, into empirical and theoretical context. Chapters Three to Five examine the pre-1945 period (Chapter Three), the 1945-77 period (Chapter Four) and the late-Cold War period from the late 1970s to 1990 (Chapter Five). Chapter Six assesses Japan sea lane diplomacy from the early 1970s to early 2003. Rapid changes to the global security environment since September 11, 2001 have hastened a transformation of Japan's own security policy stance under the administration of Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō that was already under way. This is of an intensity not seen since Nakasone Yasuhiro's premiership in the mid-1980s. The effect of such changes under Koizumi is addressed in chapters Seven and Eight, which deal with Japan's sea lane security in the post-Cold War era until February 2003.

In more detail, Chapter One profiles Japan's import dependence -- the underlying reason why the security of Japan's SLOC is perceived as a core strategic concern. It analyses the features of the global distribution of resources and the structure of Japan's industrial economy that have brought about exceptionally high levels of dependence on imported fuels, raw materials and food, and a corresponding requirement to export manufactured goods in order to fund imports. As well as profiling the extent of Japan's import dependence in key sectors, the chapter analyses the potential that exists for self-help measures, such as stockpiling, resource substitution and diversification, to reduce Japan's economic vulnerability and any temptation to compensate for this through increased military preparedness. The chapter suggests that despite such measures and long-term trends that point to a lessening of Japan's future import requirements, seaborne trade is likely to continue to be perceived within Japan as vital not only for maintaining wealth, but to sustaining basic economic activity and human survival. The major sea lanes and chokepoints used to convey Japan's overseas trade are also

---

<sup>7</sup> On that occasion, I interviewed JDA officials, serving and former MSDF officers, Coast Guard officials, analysts and representatives from the shipping industry.

identified and profiled, together with an analysis of re-routing options and estimates of the additional shipping costs they would generate.

Chapter Two defines the concept of SLOC, by tracing its origins with reference to classical theories of sea power developed around the turn of the 20th century and the stress these placed on the control of maritime communications. The chapter then examines how such concepts were reshaped by changes in military technology as borne out by the Atlantic and Pacific anti-shipping offensives of the two world wars. Next, the evolution of SLOC security is examined during the Cold War, concerning Western plans to defend Atlantic and Pacific SLOC from Soviet interdiction. The chapter then explores the widening definition of SLOC security often applied since the end of the Cold War, which includes a wide-ranging set of economic, military, law enforcement, diplomatic, non-state and environmental concerns.

Chapter Three reveals how the country's opening up by foreign naval powers in the 1850s and rapid industrialisation brought a new dependence on maritime transportation. It shows that the drive to secure a captive resource base in Asia, in order to lessen the leverage of Western powers (particularly that of the United States over its oil supplies) helped to determine the grand strategy of Japan's imperial expansion. The objective of gaining control of Southeast Asia's natural resources partly as a solution to Western energy sanctions ultimately motivated Japan to attack the United States and Great Britain in December 1941. However, the associated strategic vulnerability of seaborne imports *in transit* was not adequately appreciated until exposed by the Allied anti-shipping campaign of 1943-45. The chapter shows that the pre-1945 period is still relevant to understanding Japan's contemporary SLOC security because it is the only case study of a fully fledged attempt to cut off its seaborne supply routes. As post-war assessments by the Japanese government revealed, the wartime blockade was a major -- if still unrecognised -- factor in Japan's defeat. Furthermore, the trauma of the 'war of the *maru*' (the destruction of Japan's merchant fleet) and the failure of the Imperial Navy adequately to defend merchant shipping continues to resonate, in terms of Japan's popularly perceived vulnerability to supply disruptions and institutionally within the MSDF in terms of the priority accorded to sea lane defence.

Chapter Four locates Japan's sea lane security from 1945-77 in the context of sweeping changes to Japan's strategic and domestic circumstances arising from defeat, occupation, the onset of the Cold War and the radical effect these had upon the approach of post-war governments to the issues of security and defence. A framework of analysis governing



this and subsequent chapters is developed, identifying the major variables of Japan's defence and security policy-making environment at three levels: systemic/strategic, alliance links and domestic politics. The chapter shows that despite radical policy departures from the pre-war period, Japan's maritime geography and resource distribution ensured that continuity was maintained in policy-makers' perceptions of the country's potential vulnerability to a disruption of maritime transportation. This concern grew as Japan's imported resource needs expanded in line with economic growth and increasing reliance on Middle Eastern oil shipped via the narrow and congested Straits of Malacca. The chapter argues that notwithstanding constitutional constraints on defence capability and responses to political pressures within the US-Japan Alliance, Japanese policy-makers' own perceptions of the vulnerability of Japan's sea lanes helped to shape their decisions at the level of alliance and defence policy. The chapter also considers the influence over Japan's defence policy exercised at a transnational level, via navy-to-navy links between the MSDF and the US Navy.

Chapter Five analyses the decision-making process that propelled sea lane defence to the forefront of Japan's defence policy and alliance relations during the 1980s. Building from the framework for analysing Japan's post-1945 security outlined in the preceding chapter, it argues that Japan's involvement in sea lane defence was, *a priori*, a reaction to pressure from Washington's post-Vietnam determination to shift more of the burden of defence to regional allies. However, the chapter also demonstrates that Japan's increasing integration as a military partner in US global strategy reflected Japanese policy-makers' independent concerns about the build-up of Soviet maritime forces in the Soviet Far East and a perceived decline in the relative power of the United States. Existing concerns about the vulnerability of Japanese shipping routes, honed by the memory of the wartime blockade, the oil crises of the 1970s and attacks on Japanese tankers in the Gulf during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War lent weight to the concept of sea lane defence as a rationale to persuade politicians, the business elite and a sceptical public and political opposition of the need to develop closer alliance defence cooperation and to modernise the SDF's capabilities. The elastic spatial definition of sea lanes also gave supporters of an extra-territorial defence role for the MSDF and Air Self Defense Forces (ASDF) the flexibility to expand the geographical boundaries of Japan's self-defence zone without directly confronting the proscriptions against overseas dispatch and collective self-defence, which have constrained where, how and with whom the SDF can operate.

Chapter Six explores Japan's diplomatic efforts to maintain navigational access and safety in geographically removed sea lanes. It focuses on Southeast Asia as a crucial case study, reflecting the fact that nearly half of Japan's imports and exports are shipped via chokepoint waterways in the region, including nearly all its oil. The chapter examines official and private-level Japanese initiatives since the early 1970s and concentrates on efforts to preserve freedom of navigation in the Straits of Malacca and Indonesia's archipelagic waters as well as the transportation of Japan's nuclear fuel and waste through the region. It argues that Japan's mixed formal and informal approach has been largely successful at balancing its interests in upholding navigational safety standards and maintaining legally unencumbered access to regional sea lanes on one hand, while addressing coastal states' concerns about sovereignty, environmental risk and cost-sharing on the other.

Chapters Seven and Eight evaluate how Japan's sea lane security has evolved since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 abruptly ended the rationale for sea lane defence, based on a potential Soviet threat to Japan's SLOC linked to scenarios for superpower conflict. Chapter Seven is divided into two sections. The first provides an overview of changes that have occurred within Japan's post-Cold War defence and security policies, arguing that the end of the Cold War has been accompanied by a rise in 'realist' perceptions of Japan's security environment on the part of policy-makers and analysts, reflecting awareness of a more diffuse set of state and non-state-level security concerns as well as strategic uncertainty. This shift is then examined in terms of specific threats potentially posed to Japan's sea lanes. Section Two introduces the first of two case studies in Japan's post-Cold War SLOC security, dealing with the non-state threats posed by maritime terrorism-at-sea and piracy, and builds on the general profile of these factors given in Chapter Two. The chapter also identifies ways in which such concerns have been employed partly as pretexts for the exploration of new security roles for the SDF and the Japan Coast Guard, and the pursuit of security cooperation with the United States and various states along Asia's coastal periphery.

Chapter Eight explores potential conventional military threats to Japan's SLOC in the post-Cold War era, focussing on China and North Korea. China is seen in Japan as the most important state-level variable bearing on Japan's SLOC, reflecting its status as a party to sovereignty disputes in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait, its geographically dominant position along East Asia's coastal periphery, its growing economic and political influence in the region, and its ongoing military and naval modernisation programme. This chapter analyses perceptions among security policy-

makers (in China as well as Japan) in as far as these relate specifically to sea lanes and draws conclusions about how these are influencing the strategic dynamic of Sino-Japanese relations. The chapter reveals that underlying much of the contemporary interest in sea lane issues in Japan is an emerging realist view of China. Although still disputed within policymaking circles, this foresees two possible threats. First, China could disrupt Japan's seaborne imports collaterally as a result of the spill-over effects of a maritime conflict in the East or South China Seas. Second, at some point after 2020, China may be sufficiently emboldened by the modernisation of its naval, air and missile capabilities to obstruct Japan's seaborne imports intentionally for strategic leverage. It is also argued that concerns about the security of sea lanes are used to justify aspects of the SDF's force structure development and the adoption of new security legislation designed to expand the geographical and operational scope of Japan's security ambit. The more limited but also more immediate maritime security threats presented by North Korea are also considered in this regard, especially concerning the intrusion of North Korean surface vessels into Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone in 1999 and 2001.

#### Research findings.

The findings of the thesis are presented in a Conclusion, following Chapter Eight. Briefly, the first major finding is that the strategic imperative of SLOC security has remained essentially consistent over time for Japan despite its shifting threat perceptions. The second finding is that material strategic calculations alone are insufficient to explain policy responses linked with sea lane security in the post-war period. Political advantages associated with the instrumental use of SLOC security have led decision-makers at various levels to use such concerns to justify contentious aspects of defence and alliance policy. The Conclusion ends with a discussion of the likely implications of these findings for the future directions of Japan's SLOC security.



## CHAPTER ONE

### Japan's Maritime Trade and Trade Routes: an Empirical Analysis

#### Introduction.

The extent to which sea lines of communication (SLOC) have historically been perceived by Japanese policy-makers as core security concerns in large part reflects the economic importance to Japan of maintaining inward-bound shipments of fuels, metal ores, other raw materials and food, as well as outward-bound exports of manufactured goods. This chapter provides an empirical analysis of Japan's economic geography, consumption patterns and dependence on imported resources, and major trading partners. It shows that overseas trade, although accounting for a relatively small proportion of national output, is vital to Japan's survival, as a reflection of its poor resource endowment. The assessment put forward establishes that the basic imperative of Japan's SLOC security is its vulnerability to supply disruption. The data set out here will serve as a basis for comparison, in later chapters, with policy-makers' perceptions about where such vulnerabilities are located, geographically and sectorally.

After a brief geographic overview in Section I, the defining features of Japan's economy are outlined in Section II, including its poor natural resource allocation and resultant dependence on overseas sources for a wide range of essential industrial and energy commodities, as well as food to meet its nutritional needs. Efforts to build oil and mineral stockpiles are assessed together with other austerity measures that are potentially available to mitigate the impact of a blockade or other systemic disruption to Japan's resource in-flows. Imports are broken down into raw materials, mineral fuels, foodstuffs and manufactured goods. These are sourced by region and by country in the case of key commodities such as oil. Japan's principal export markets are profiled only briefly, reflecting the greater strategic importance of imports.

In Section III, the infrastructure underpinning Japan's trade and the maritime geography of its main trade routes is explored. The size and composition of Japan's merchant fleet is analysed, before consideration is given to the prevailing trade routes that link Japanese ports to their major resource suppliers and export markets, highlighting three basic 'streams' connecting Japan, first with Europe, the Middle East and Southeast Asia; second with Australasia and the South Pacific; and third, with North and South America. Particular attention is paid to those areas where Japanese trade is most concentrated and potentially vulnerable to disruption, at 'chokepoint' straits and seas in

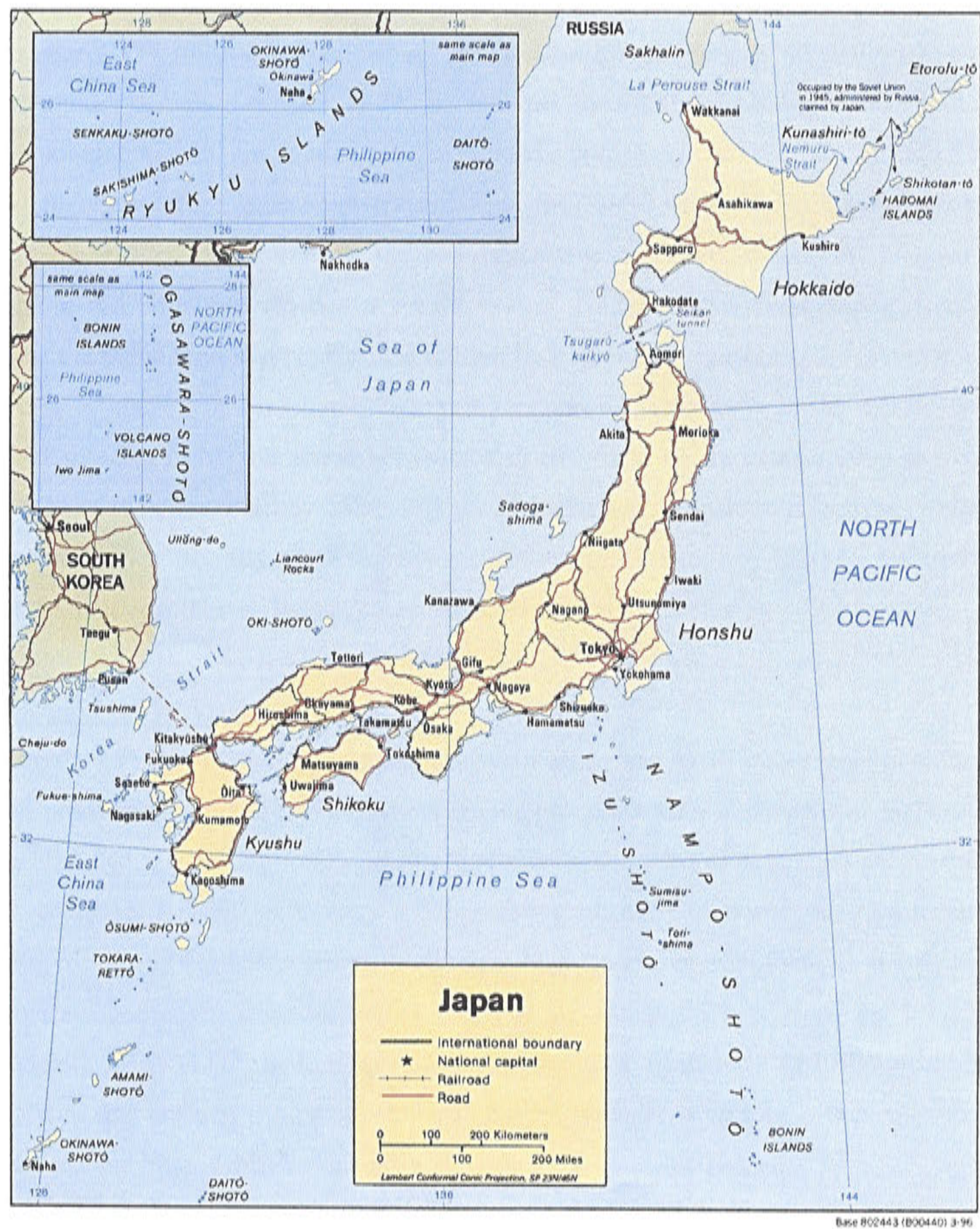


Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Estimates are compared of the likely costs arising from the closure of chokepoints and the availability of alternative diversionary routes.

I. Geographic overview.

Japan is an archipelago composed of four major islands, Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu and over 3,000 lesser islands (Map 1).

Map 1: Japan and surrounding straits<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Source: CIA/University of Texas: [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle\\_east\\_and\\_asia/schina\\_sea\\_88.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/schina_sea_88.jpg)



Two prominent island chains extend along southwesterly and southerly axes. The Ryūkyū island chain, including Okinawa, runs parallel to the Nansei Shotō trench, towards Taiwan. The Izu-Ogasawara trench extends almost due south of Tokyo as far as Iō Jima. At nearly 30,000 kilometres (km), Japan's coastline is one third longer than that of the United States but no inland point is more than 150 km from the sea. Japan is bisected by central mountain ranges that have restricted human settlement to around one quarter of national territory. Only 11 per cent of surface land area is used for cultivation.

With nearly 127 million people, Japan still has the seventh largest population in the world and a population density, at 335 persons per square km, exceeding that of India. The population is predominantly urbanised and concentrated in a coastal conglomeration which runs uninterrupted from the Kantō Plain (including Tokyo) to Hiroshima. Over 43 per cent of the population live in Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya<sup>2</sup>. Although the birth rate reached a record low of 1.33 in 2001, demographic trends suggest the population will peak at 128 million in 2006, owing largely to the fact that, at 80 years of age, Japan now has the longest average life-expectancy in the world: the ratio of those aged 65 and above is expected to rise from 17 per cent in 2000 to over one-third of the population by 2050. However, without large-scale immigration (which is politically and socially problematic), the population is likely to fall below current levels in 2013, decreasing sharply thereafter, to around 100 million by 2050<sup>3</sup>.

## **II. Economic overview.**

During the 1950s and 1960s, Japan's economic miracle was based on a model of value-added production, whereby manufactured goods produced from imported raw materials were exported, generating a surplus that could be re-invested in expanded production and access to foreign technology<sup>4</sup>. The success of the Japanese 'state capitalist' developmental model has been attributed to a high degree of coordination amongst a triumvirate composed of industrialists, bureaucrats and politicians from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which held power continuously from 1955 to 1993, resulting in policies that ensured capital allocation to targeted industrial sectors, effective export promotion and high levels of regulation protecting the domestic market.

---

<sup>2</sup> *Japan Almanac 1999*, Asahi Shimbunsha, Tokyo, 1998, p 60.

<sup>3</sup> The National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, Population Projection for Japan from 2001 to 2050: With Long-range Population Projections, 2051-2100 at: [www.ipss.go.jp/English/ppfj02/suikai\\_g\\_e.html](http://www.ipss.go.jp/English/ppfj02/suikai_g_e.html)

<sup>4</sup> Nariai Osamu, *History of the Modern Japanese Economy*, Foreign Press Center, Japan, Tokyo, 1997, pp 33-35.



While the expansion of foreign trade was essential to Japan's rapid post-war development, trade makes up a surprisingly small fraction of the economy. The ratio of Japan's exports and imports to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 11 per cent and 7 per cent respectively in 1986, since which time the weighting of trade to GDP has risen only slightly<sup>5</sup>. With the exception of those years immediately after the oil crises of the 1970s, Japan has maintained a trade surplus since 1965. In 1998, since when trade levels have remained broadly unchanged, Japan's total import bill amounted to \$319 billion, compared to export receipts of \$440 billion. Since 1960, Japan has made the transition from exporting primary industrial goods, such as textiles, iron and steel, to much greater reliance on medium technology goods including automobiles, electronic goods and chemicals and increasingly towards high-technology goods and services. However, Japan's developmental model is now acknowledged to have brought with it economic dysfunction, as relationship-based lender-creditor arrangements and the influence of vested interests entrenched within the political system encouraged investment in delinquent assets, augmenting high levels of bad debt in the banking system and contributing to chronic over-capacity and, in turn, deflation<sup>6</sup>.

After heavy industries such as shipbuilding powered Japan's economic expansion in the 1960s, the contribution of manufacturing to GDP fell from over one-third to less than one-quarter between 1970 and 1995<sup>7</sup>. During the 1980s, spurred by the mounting cost of domestic production, 'sunset industries' began relocating overseas, to Southeast Asia in particular. This initial 'hollowing out' is being followed by the relocation of a further proportion of the industrial base to China, where labour costs are 5 per cent of those in Japan and land prices a fraction of the Japanese average. The allure of China's low factor costs is such that high-technology firms whose Japan-based plants remain competitive are also reported to be relocating there<sup>8</sup>.

These structural shifts combined with stagnant economic growth over the last decade have constrained Japan's raw material imports. However, this does not alter the continued importance of heavy industry to the domestic economy and its associated commodity and energy resource import requirements. For example, although crude steel

---

<sup>5</sup> Reinhard Drifte, *Japan's Foreign Policy*, Royal Institute of International Affairs/Routledge, London, 1990, p 65; and *Japan: A Country Study*, United States Federal Research Division, Library of Congress/Department of the Army, Washington D.C., 1992, p 270.

<sup>6</sup> Ben Dolven, 'A Blueprint For Recovery', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 31, 2002, pp 44-48.

<sup>7</sup> *Facts and Figures of Japan*, 1997 Edition, Foreign Press Center, Japan, Tokyo, 1997, pp 40-43.

<sup>8</sup> Goto Yasuhiro, 'Rush into China lacks rational basis', *The Nikkei Weekly*, December 2, 2002, p 7.

production peaked at 120,000 tons in 1973, in the mid-1990s Japan still produced over 100,000 tons of steel per year; more than it turned out in 1970 and 15 times more than in 1940<sup>9</sup>. As Japan is almost totally dependent on overseas sources of supply for iron ore, this requires around 120 million tons to be imported annually<sup>10</sup>.

The move to high-end services and the production of information-technology goods that require fewer resource-inputs than 'old economy' staples such as steel, ship-building and cars means that Japan's prosperity is not as directly linked to imports of mineral ores as it was during the industrial expansion of the 1960s and 1970s. This trend appears likely to continue for the foreseeable future, with little prospect of a return to the high growth of the 1980s and the likelihood that manufacturers will seek to relocate production offshore in order to remain competitive<sup>11</sup>.

#### 1. Resource dependence.

Basic dependence on foreign imports of minerals and fossil fuels remains a defining feature of Japan's economy at the start of the 21st century. Japan is naturally lacking across a range of non-ferrous ores and metals required in heavy industry, such as iron ore, bauxite, manganese, nickel and titanium. Apart from very limited coal, oil and gas reserves -- proven oil reserves of 59 million barrels amount to a little over ten days' consumption -- Japan is largely dependent on seaborne imports for mineral fuels, minerals and many basic foodstuffs<sup>12</sup>.

---

<sup>9</sup> Japan Iron and Steel Federation figures cited in *Japan Almanac 1999*, Asahi Shimbunsha, Tokyo, 1998, p 152.

<sup>10</sup> *Facts and Figures of Japan*, 1997 Edition, Foreign Press Center, Japan, Tokyo, 1997, p 42.

<sup>11</sup> 'GDP sags under deflation, reform fears', *The Nikkei Weekly*, November 18, 2002, p 1, 19.

<sup>12</sup> US Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, Country Profile, at: [www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/japan.html](http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/japan.html)



**Figure 1:** Japan’s import dependence for fuels, minerals and foodstuffs

Crude oil	99.7%	Cobalt	100%
Iron ore	99.8%	Zinc	92%
Bauxite	100%	Titanium	100%
Manganese	100%	Cotton	100%
Wool	100%	Wheat	93%
Copper Ore	99.9%	Timber	80%
Nickel	100%	Fish/shellfish	44%

Source: Facts and Figures of Japan, Foreign Press Center, Japan, Tokyo, 1997, pp 40-42.

Because of its unfavourable resource endowment Japan imports over 80 per cent of its primary energy needs, a figure approached only by South Korea among major economies within the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In 1997, Japan’s total mineral fuel import bill amounted to around \$60 billion, of which crude oil accounted for \$35 billion (roughly equal to the defence budget), liquefied natural gas (LNG) \$10 billion, petroleum products \$7 billion and coal \$7 billion. Following the first oil crisis, which saw oil prices quadruple between 1973 and 1975, the government devoted great effort towards improving energy efficiency and invested heavily in alternative energy sources, especially nuclear power. The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI -- now renamed the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry) drew up an energy programme to improve the nation’s energy security through a raft of measures directed at domestic demand and international supply<sup>13</sup>. These included:

- conserving energy;
- fully exploiting domestic sources;
- developing alternatives to petroleum;
- developing closer cooperation with producer states;
- diversifying energy sources away from the Middle East;
- siting energy production in the most efficient locations; and
- stockpiling coal and oil (a statutory requirement under the 1975 Petroleum Stockpiling Law obliges private oil refiners to stock a minimum 70 days’ worth of consumption).

<sup>13</sup> Nariai Osamu, *History of the Modern Japanese Economy*, Foreign Press Center, Japan, Tokyo, 1997, pp 45-49.

As a result of government and private initiatives, Japan was transformed into one of the most energy-efficient of the major economies, enabling it to absorb a second wave of oil price rises six years later with relative ease<sup>14</sup>. Energy intensity in the industrial sector overall improved by 38 per cent between 1973 and 1999. Heavy investment in alternatives to petroleum resulted in greater use of coal and LNG, and launched Japan into the top ranks of nuclear-energy states. As of July 2001, 51 nuclear power plants were in operation in Japan, surpassed only by the United States and France. However, mounting safety concerns and public opposition since the 1999 criticality accident at Tokaimura could prevent further expansion of the nuclear sector<sup>15</sup>. Since 2000, energy policy has been directed toward the '3Es' of energy security, economic growth and environmental protection. A 1994 advisory report drawn up by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) set a target of cutting growth in energy consumption to under 1 per cent up to 2010, and oil's share in energy production from 56 per cent to 48 per cent<sup>16</sup>. However, demand for energy in transportation -- where scope for alternative fuels to oil is limited -- and the residential sector has nearly doubled since 1973, in contrast to trends within the industrial sector<sup>17</sup>.

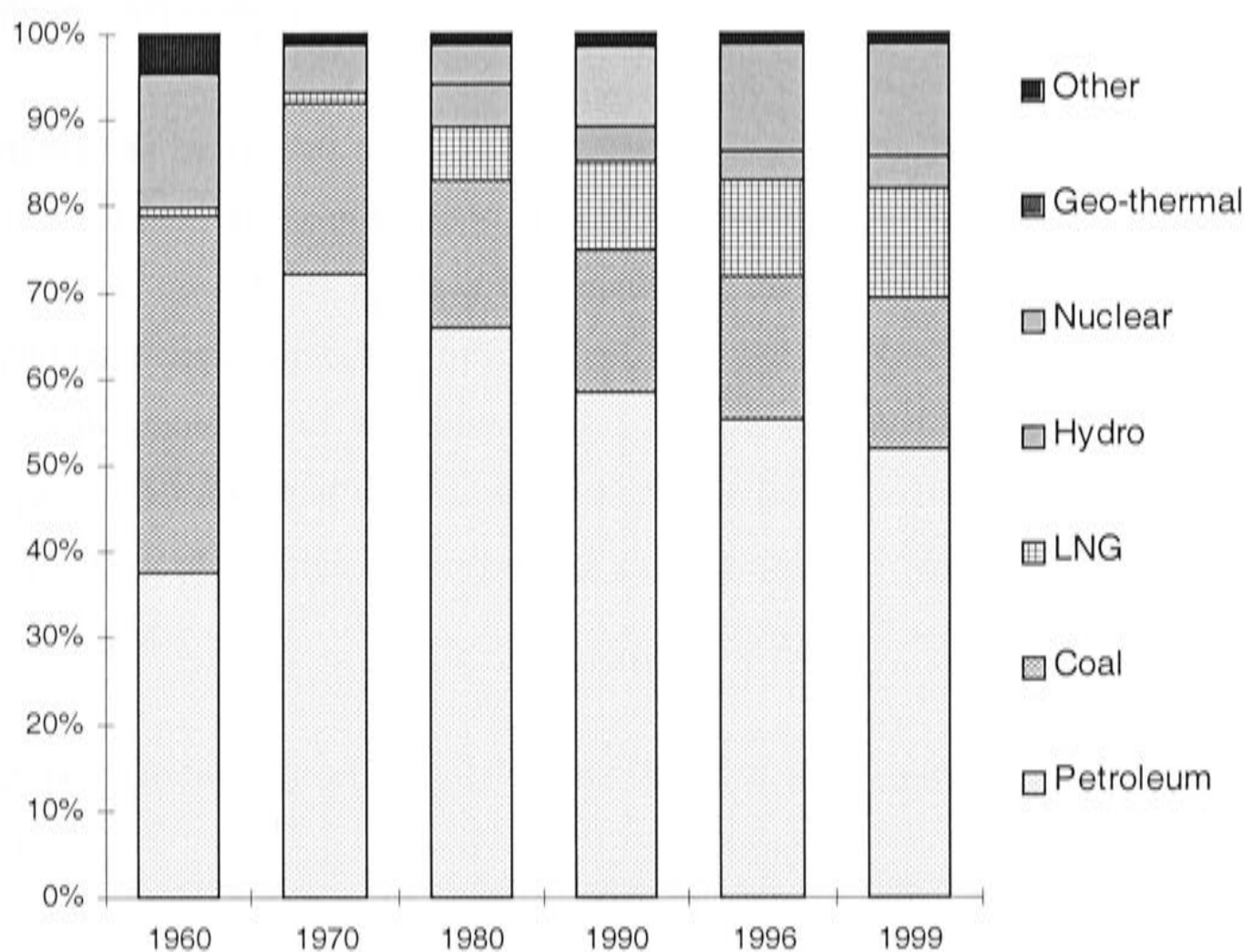
---

<sup>14</sup> In 1995, Japan's per capita energy consumption was less than that of France or Germany and almost half that of the United States. Canada, with less than a quarter of Japan's population consumed two and a half times as much petroleum as Japan in 1996; *Japan Almanac 1999*, Asahi Shimbunsha, Tokyo, 1998, pp 174-175.

<sup>15</sup> 'Energy in Japan', Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, September 2001, p 34; and *Japan Almanac 1999*, Asahi Shimbunsha, Tokyo, 1998, p 171.

<sup>16</sup> METI policy document, 'Energy in Japan', at [www.meti.go.jp/english/aboutmeti/data/a231201e.html](http://www.meti.go.jp/english/aboutmeti/data/a231201e.html)

<sup>17</sup> 'Energy in Japan', Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, September 2001, pp 11-14.

**Figure 2:** Breakdown of Japan's primary energy supply, 1960-99

Source: METI/ Japan Almanac 1999, Asahi Shimbunsha, Tokyo, 1998, p. 171<sup>18</sup>.

(Actual percentages are presented in tabular form in Annex 1)

## 2. Imports.

According to the former Maritime Self Defense Forces Chief of Staff Yoshida Manabu, any calculation as to the minimum level of imports required under emergency conditions is approximate. However, against the scenario of a naval and air blockade or some other calamity befalling the international trading system, Japan's austerity import requirements are estimated at around one-third of normal requirements, in order to sustain essential economic activity and to support the population<sup>19</sup>. However, Shilling (1976) has argued that scope exists for Japan to reduce its import volume by up to 70-80 per cent without curbing consumption levels, by halting exports and switching productive capacity to meet domestic demand. Accordingly, he claimed that shipping requirements could be cut from 1,850 arrivals per month to 400. If consumption were reduced, this could be lowered to just 280 per month -- or 15 per cent of 1975 levels<sup>20</sup>. Although this analysis is now over 25 years old, demographic projections of a rapidly declining population combined with the likelihood of a declining industrial base suggest

<sup>18</sup> 1999 figures from Statistics Bureau and Statistics Center, Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications: [www.stat.go.jp/english/data/handbook/c07cont.htm](http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/handbook/c07cont.htm)

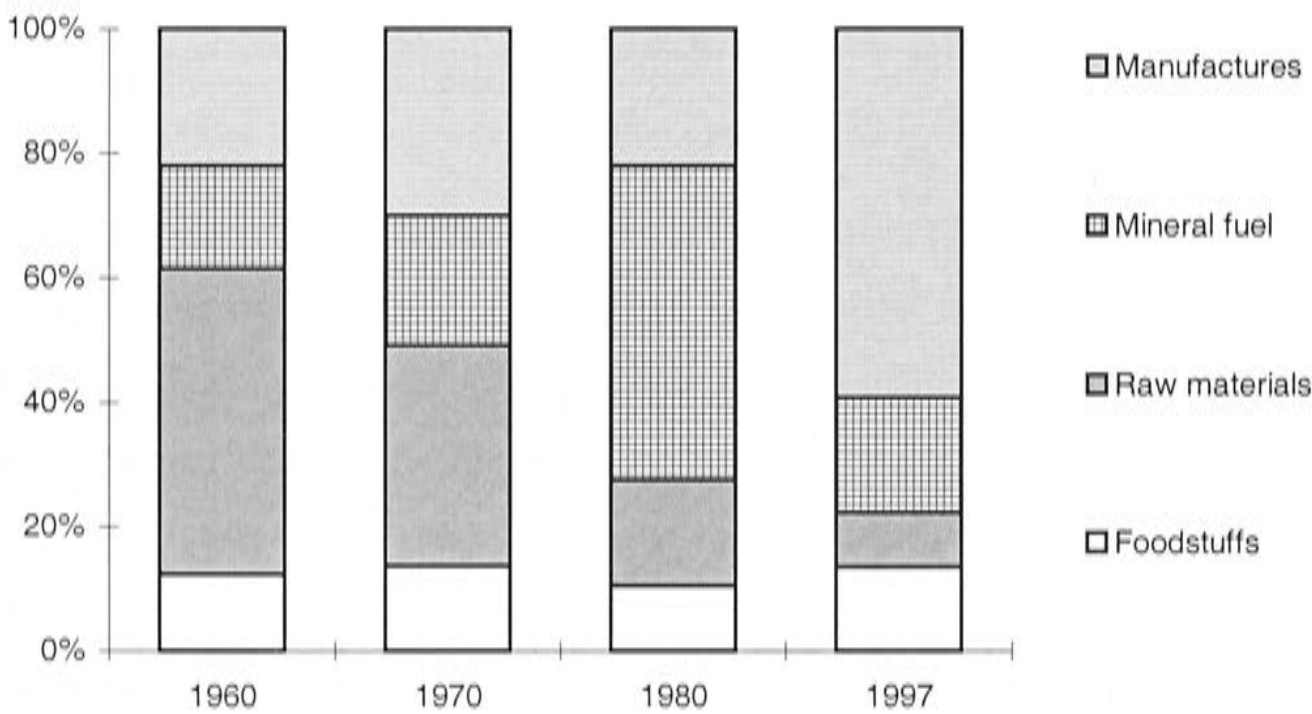
<sup>19</sup> In Michael J. O'Connor and Malcolm J. Kennedy, *Safely By Sea*, University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland, 1990, pp 37-38.



that Shilling’s estimate still bears scrutiny in Japan’s contemporary economic and security environment.

Imports can be divided into raw materials, foodstuffs, mineral fuels and manufactures. While the ratio of Japan’s imports to exports, by value, is roughly 3:4, when measured by volume the ratio is reversed to around 7:1, due to the large quantity of solid and liquid bulk commodities, led by crude oil, coal and iron ore. In 1998, seaborne imports to Japan amounted to 730 million tons, compared to 101 million tons of exports<sup>21</sup>. While economists tend to measure trade exclusively in value terms during peacetime, the logistics of maintaining in-flows of raw materials in such volumes is a significant security factor.

**Figure 3:** Breakdown of Japan’s imports; percentage value by sector



Source: MITI (*Japan Almanac 1999*, Asahi Shimbunsha, Tokyo, 1998, p 116).

Total world seaborne trade totalled just over 5 billion tons in 1998, of which crude oil made up 31 per cent, coal 9 per cent and iron ore 8 per cent. Together with petroleum products and grains, these made up more than half the total of world seaborne trade. Japan’s share of the total was 16.4 per cent (Figure 4). This represents a slight decrease from 1994, when Japan accounted for 18.5 per cent of global tonnage transported by ship; or 21.4 per cent in ton-miles -- the standard unit for measuring the efficiency for

<sup>20</sup> David Shilling, ‘A Reassessment of Japan’s Naval Defense Needs’, *Asian Survey*, Vol. 16 No. 3 (March 1976), pp 216-229.  
<sup>21</sup> Japan Shipowners’ Association figures: [www.jsanet.or.jp/index2.html](http://www.jsanet.or.jp/index2.html).

the movement of goods by sea<sup>22</sup>. Measured in ton-miles, Japan's trade accounts for slightly higher values for most commodities, except petroleum products.

**Figure 4:** Seaborne trade volumes for Japan and the world, 1998 (million tons)

<b><u>Commodity</u></b>	<b>global volume</b>	<b>% global trade vol.</b>	<b>Japanese volume</b>	<b>% Japanese trade vol.</b>	<b>Japan's % of global trade vol.</b>
<b>Oil</b>	<b>1,550</b>	30.6	<b>217</b>	26	14.0
<b>Coal</b>	<b>465</b>	9.2	<b>131</b>	16	28.3
<b>Iron ore</b>	<b>420</b>	8.3	<b>121</b>	14.5	28
<b>Oil products</b>	<b>395</b>	7.8	<b>31</b>	3.5	7.8
<b>Grains</b>	<b>190</b>	3.7	<b>32</b>	4	16.7
<b>Others</b>	<b>2,050</b>	40.4	<b>299</b>	36	14.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,070</b>	100	<b>831</b>	100	16.4

Source: Japan Shipowners' Association.

There are two important trends in Japan's imports over the last 40 years. First, the percentage value of raw materials declined from almost half in 1960 to under 10 per cent by 1998. Second, the major increase has been in manufactures, which now account for nearly 60 per cent of the import bill. The value share of mineral fuel imported in 1997, while slightly up on 1960, was sharply down from 1980, when it made up half of the import bill as a result of price hikes during the second oil crisis. Among the four import sectors, the value of foodstuffs has remained the most stable.

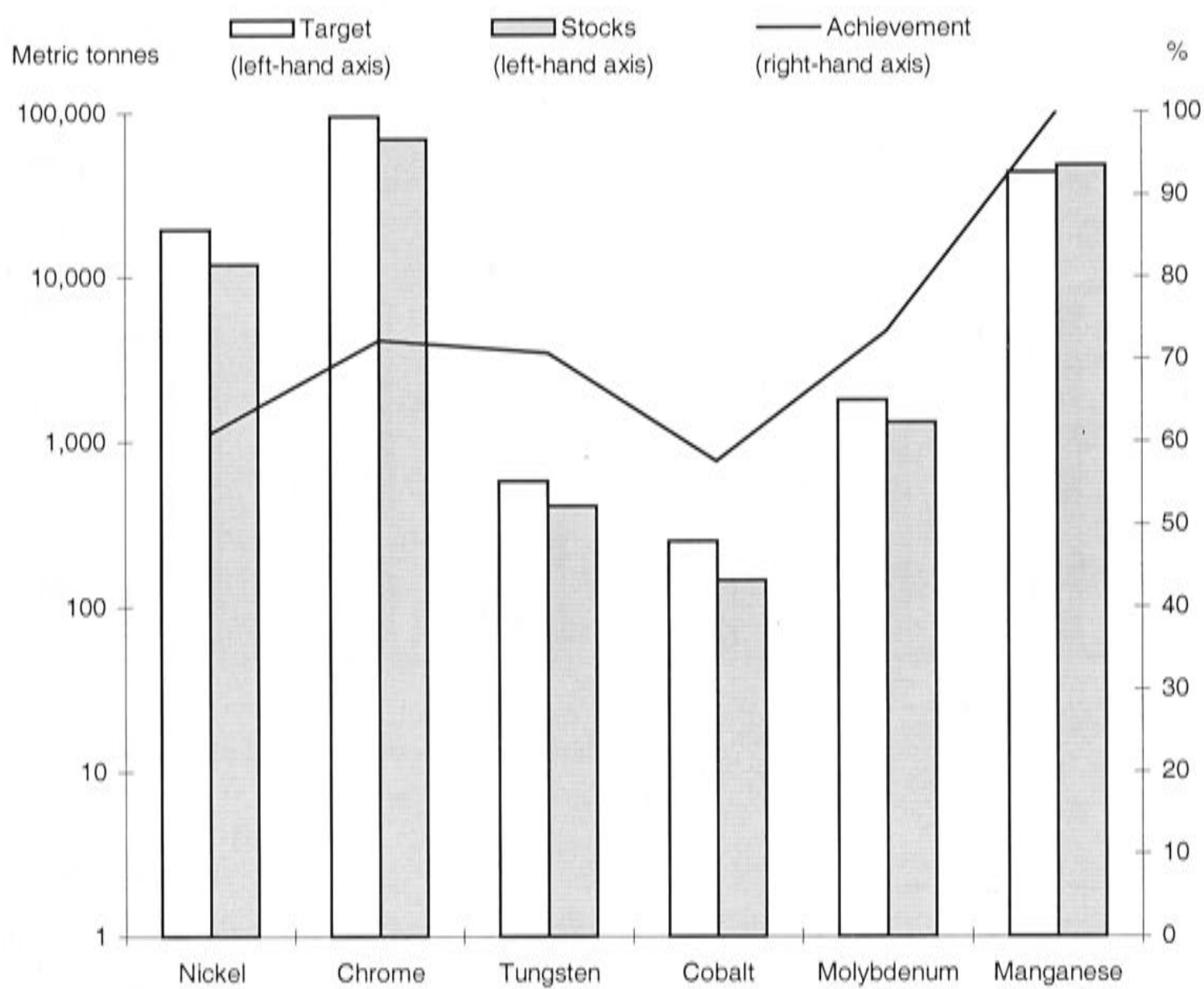
#### i) Raw materials.

By value, the most important of Japan's raw material imports in 1997 was timber (2.6 per cent of total import value), followed by iron ore (1 per cent). In 1995, raw materials imported in substantial quantities included: iron ore (120 million tons), timber (89 million tons), copper and nickel (3.8 million tons each). After oil and coal, iron ore occupies the largest volume of any imported commodity, accounting for around 16 per cent of seaborne imports. Non-ferrous metals totalled 3.7 per cent. Japan must import other important non-ferrous metals such as manganese, zinc, chrome, titanium and cobalt, but in much smaller quantities, making them easier to stockpile. In 2000, a METI stockpiling target of 43,183 tons for manganese had already been exceeded and

<sup>22</sup> 'Japan and the U.N. Convention Law of the Sea', Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, at:

targets for nickel (19,505 tons), chrome (94,853 tons), tungsten (579 tons), cobalt (251 tons) and molybdenum (1,771 tons) were respectively 61 per cent, 72.3 per cent, 70.8 per cent, 57.6 per cent and 73.4 per cent completed (Figure 5). METI aims to achieve its non-ferrous metal stockpile objectives by 2005<sup>23</sup>.

**Figure 5:** Japan’s non-ferrous metal stockpiles in tons (2000)



Source: Mining and Mineral Agency/METI.

ii) Mineral fuels.

a) Oil.

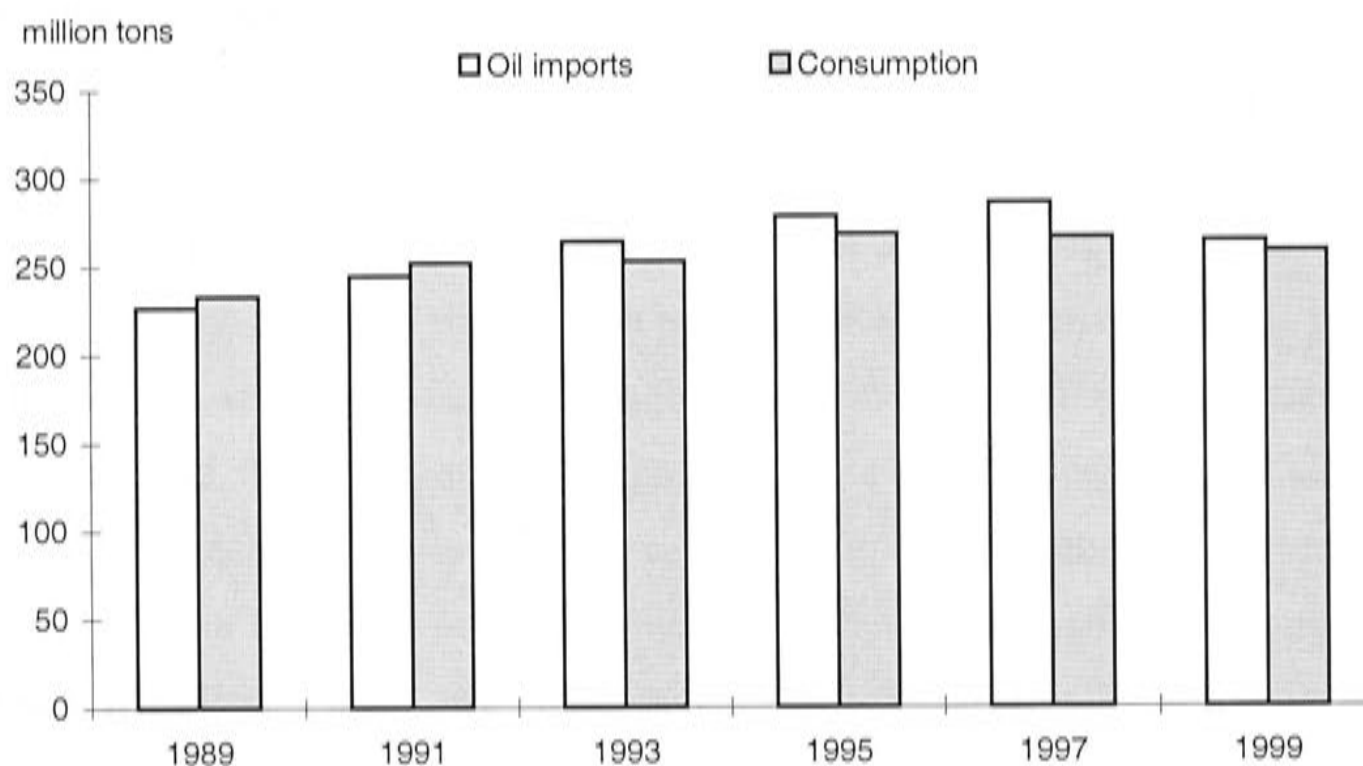
Relative dependence on crude oil for energy production in Japan peaked at 77 per cent in 1973, declining to 52 per cent in 1999<sup>24</sup>. Despite efficiency gains, demand for oil maintained pace with economic growth in the 1980s, until crude imports overtook 1975

[www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/sea/convention.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economy/sea/convention.html).  
<sup>23</sup> Interview with Mining and Mineral Agency materials supplied by Imura Akiko, Deputy Director, International Division, Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, Ministry for Economy, Trade and Industry, Tokyo, February 28, 2002.  
<sup>24</sup> 'Energy in Japan', Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, September 2001, p 17; and *Facts and Figures of Japan*, 1997 Edition, Foreign Press Center, Japan, Tokyo, 1997, p 58; despite the reduction in oil dependence, Japan's reliance on oil for energy production is only comparable with Italy among other G7 members.



levels again in 1990<sup>25</sup>. However, economic stagnation and the shift to alternative fuels has caused demand to fall since the late 1990s (Figure 6). Monthly imports in early 2002 were down by around 13 per cent year-on-year<sup>26</sup>. As of June 2002, Japan's crude oil stockpiles totalled 91 million kilolitres, respectively divided between those held by the state-owned Japan National Oil Corporation (48 million) and private oil firms (43 million)<sup>27</sup>. This represents around 150 days of domestic consumption<sup>28</sup>.

**Figure 6:** Japan's oil imports<sup>29</sup> and consumption (million tons)



Source: BP Amoco Statistical Review of World Energy<sup>30</sup>

#### b) LNG and coal.

Japan imports over 25 per cent of all coal traded globally and is easily the world's largest importer of steam coal, which is used in power generation and cement production. Large quantities of coking coal are also imported. In 1999, coal made up 17.4 per cent of primary energy, compared to 41.0 per cent in 1960<sup>31</sup>. Reliance on imports sharply escalated over the same period, from around 14 per cent to around 97

<sup>25</sup> *Japan Almanac 1999*, Asahi Shimbunsha, Tokyo, 1998, p 171.

<sup>26</sup> 'Crude oil imports decline 13.4%', *The Japan Times*, March 1, 2002, p 9.

<sup>27</sup> The stockpile figures do not include bunker and aviation fuel stockpiled either by the Japan Defense Agency or the US military in Japan. (Interview with Arima Jun, Director for International Energy Strategy, Ministry for Economy, Trade and Industry, Tokyo, February 28, 2002).

<sup>28</sup> 'Energy in Japan', Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, September 2001, pp 17-18.

<sup>29</sup> Crude oil and oil products; oil products typically make up between 10 and 20 per cent of the total. In 1999, Japan imported 215 million tons of crude and 49 million tons of oil products. (Agency of Natural Resources and Energy figures cited in 'Imports of Oil' 1985-1994', *Facts and Figures of Japan*, 1997 Edition, Foreign Press Center, Japan, Tokyo, 1997, p 59).

<sup>30</sup> BP Amoco Statistical Review of World Energy: 'Oil Consumption 1989-1999', 'Trade Movements 1989-1999' [www.bp.com/worldenergy/oil/index.htm](http://www.bp.com/worldenergy/oil/index.htm).

<sup>31</sup> 'Energy in Japan', Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, September 2001, p 22.

per cent in 1997. Imports grew from 8,595 tons in 1960 to 149 million tons in 2000. LNG has emerged as a major fuel, particularly in power generation, although its share in primary energy production is still less than that of coal, at 11 per cent in 1996. It is projected to rise to 12-13 per cent by 2010, although this is somewhat below METI forecasts from the early 1980s<sup>32</sup>. Total LNG imports in 2000 amounted to 54 million tons<sup>33</sup>.

### iii) Foodstuffs.

The relatively stable proportion of foodstuffs among Japan's overall imports since 1960 has masked a steady decline in the self-sufficiency rate for staple food groups. By the late 1980s, Japan was importing half of its calorific intake, as rising affluence whetted Japanese appetites for non-traditional foods, such as red meat, wheat and corn. The major exception is rice, in which Japan is self-sufficient, partly for domestic political as well as food security reasons, through a combination of the concentrated use of pesticides and fertilisers, and tariff protection<sup>34</sup>. For other cereals and soya beans, import dependency is over 90 per cent (Figure 7). Overall, Japan's cereal self-sufficiency rate is just 30 per cent, which compares to surpluses in the United States, United Kingdom, France and Germany. Measured in terms of the calorie-supply, Japan's food self-sufficiency dwindled from 79 per cent in 1960 to 42 per cent in 1996<sup>35</sup>.

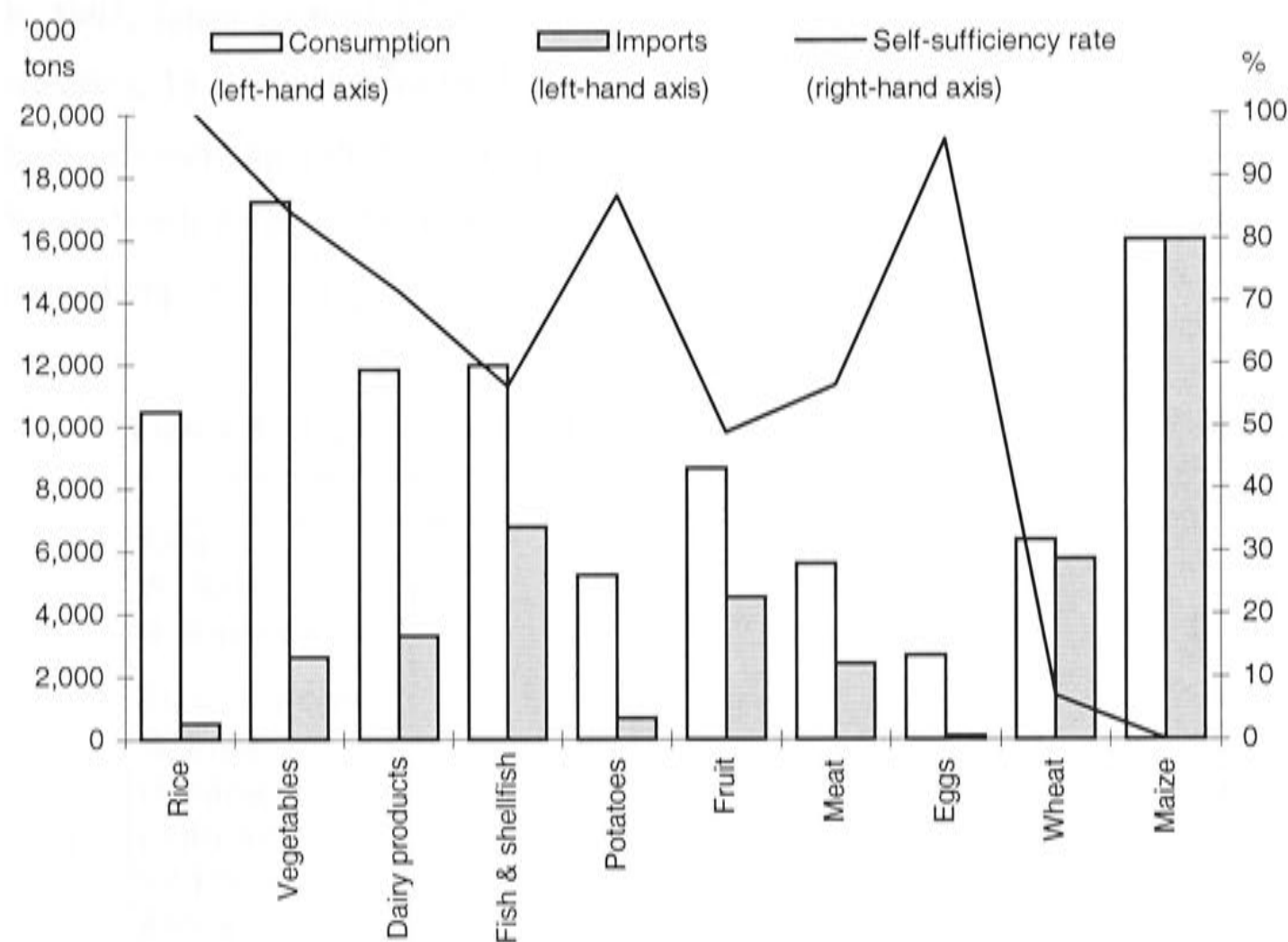
<sup>32</sup> Chapman, Drifte and Gow, *Japan's Quest for Comprehensive Security: Defence, Diplomacy, Dependence*, Frances Pinter, London, 1983, p 198.

<sup>33</sup> 'Energy in Japan', Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, September 2001, p 28.

<sup>34</sup> *Japan Almanac 1999*, Asahi Shimbunsha, Tokyo, 1998, p 139; and Chapman, Drifte and Gow, *Japan's Quest for Comprehensive Security: Defence, Diplomacy, Dependence*, Frances Pinter, London, 1983, p 206.

<sup>35</sup> *Japan Almanac 1999*, Asahi Shimbunsha, Tokyo, 1998, p 135-136. Food self-sufficiency is calculated in different ways, according to calorie-supply, self-sufficiency in staple foods etc. For international comparisons the calorie supply is most commonly used.

**Figure 7:** Food imports and self-sufficiency rates (1,000 tons), 1995



Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries.

Japanese diets, while more meat-rich than they used to be, still rely heavily on marine products for protein intake, accounting for 40 per cent of the average daily supply of protein in 1996. Japan is the largest importer of marine products in the world. In 1995, it imported almost one-third of the global marine catch, accounting for 5 per cent of its total imports by value. Japan’s own fishery production has been gradually declining since 1989, when China overtook it as the leading global producer. Japan is currently fourth-placed in the world.

iv) Manufactured products.

The sharp increase in Japan’s import of foreign manufactures in recent years is due to the expansion of machinery and equipment as well as consumer goods, which have gained more liberal access to the Japanese market in recent years. Major imported manufactured items include computers and semi-conductors, textiles and chemicals. In addition, many firms are now ‘re-importing’ products manufactured in China and Southeast Asia for final assembly in Japan<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>36</sup> ‘China replacing U.S. as top exporter to Japan’, *The Nikkei Weekly*, December 16, 2002, p 1.

v) Import partners.

In 1997, Japan sourced 37 per cent of its imports from Asia, 25 per cent from North America, 15 per cent from the European Union (EU) and 11 per cent from the Middle East, representing a shift favouring trade flows from Asia and to a lesser extent, Europe. While North America has managed to maintain its share, other regions have declined in overall importance (Figure 8).

**Figure 8:** Japan's import partners by region<sup>37</sup> (percentage market share)

	1960	1970	1980	1997
<b>Asia</b>	21.1	17.6	25.8	37
<b>W. Asia</b>	9.4	12	31.3	-
<b>N. America</b>	39.1	34.4	20.7	25.3
<b>EU/E. Europe</b>	-	-	-	14.7
<b>M. East</b>	-	-	-	11.3
<b>Oceania</b>	9	9.6	6	5.3
<b>Latin America</b>	6.9	7.3	4.1	3.4
<b>Ex-USSR</b>	-	-	-	1.5
<b>Africa</b>	3.6	5.8	3.2	1.4
<b>W. Europe</b>	8.8	10.2	7.4	-
<b>Comecon</b>	2.1	3.1	1.5	-

Source: METI/ *Japan Almanac 1999*, Asahi Shimbunsha, Tokyo, 1998, p 116.

On a country basis, the United States remains Japan's most important trading partner. In 1995, Japan imported \$75 billion worth of US goods, followed by China (\$36 billion), South Korea (\$17 billion), Australia (\$15 billion), Taiwan and Germany (\$14 billion each). However, China has grown increasingly important as a source of low-cost imports, with bilateral trade in 2002 expected to be in the region of \$90 billion, driven by the out-sourcing of production from Japan. On present trends, Chinese imports to Japan appear set to surpass those from the United States in 2003<sup>38</sup>.

This general pattern yields an incomplete picture, as dependence on particular suppliers in key commodity sectors remains strong. In the wake of the oil crises, Japan made efforts to diversify its sources of supply in minerals as well as energy, opening up new resource bases in the Indian Ocean and Latin America. India and Brazil became major new suppliers, reducing Japan's dependence on Australia<sup>39</sup>. Agreements to supply Japan with a wide variety of primary commodities were concluded with countries in East Africa and South Asia, raising the profile of the Indian Ocean as a resource base. It is

<sup>37</sup> Pre-1995 figures, for Southeast Asia and 'Communist Asia' have been combined to enable comparison with METI's post-1995 'Asia' category. 'West Asia' was also redesignated Middle East in 1995.

<sup>38</sup> 'China replacing U.S. as top exporter to Japan', *The Nikkei Weekly*, December 16, 2002, p 1, 23.



generally recognised, both within Japan and internationally, that commodity supplies are more likely to be disrupted at source than in transit<sup>40</sup>. The record of attempts by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to maintain the price of oil at the historically high rates of the late 1970s demonstrates that supplier countries' market leverage is limited; price, as in all markets, being a function of demand as well as supply. However, the restriction of supply at source, whether for commercial and/or political reasons, would involve fewer political costs than any military effort to interrupt the supply of commodities in transit. To protect itself from supply disruption at source, Japan's efforts to diversify its resource supply base have been relatively successful, with the crucial exception of oil.

Japan's success in lessening dependence on the Middle East for petroleum since the oil crises have been reversed since the late 1980s, although intra-regionally the United Arab Emirates (UAE) now supplies more oil to Japan than Saudi Arabia. In 1970, 85 per cent of Japan's crude was sourced from the Middle East, falling to 68 per cent in 1987. However, by December 1998, Japan was importing 82 per cent of its oil from the Gulf region<sup>41</sup>. In 2000 overall, this rose to 87 per cent, peaking at 91.7 per cent in December 2001<sup>42</sup>. In 1997, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) supplied 28 per cent of Japan's crude oil, Saudi Arabia 25.3 per cent and Iran 9.6 per cent<sup>43</sup>. In 2000, the top five suppliers were UAE (25.6 per cent), Saudi Arabia (21.6 per cent), Iran (11.5 per cent) and Qatar (9.6 per cent). Indonesia (4.8 per cent) and China (2.2 per cent) retained their long-held positions as Japan's largest non-Middle Eastern oil suppliers. The prospect of access to Russian oil as a means of reducing Japan's dependence on the Middle East was revived during Prime Minister Junichirō Koizumi's visit to Russia in January 2003, with a proposed pipeline that would transport Siberian oil 4,000 km to a Sea of Japan terminal at Nakhodka<sup>44</sup>. Japan has also made efforts to invest in exploration in the Caspian to lessen its dependence on Arabian oil. Mitsui acquired a 15 per cent stake in Azerbaijan's Kur Dashi oil field in 2001, reported to contain reserves of 0.5-1.0 billion barrels. However, new exploration will be offset within the

<sup>39</sup> Friedman and Lebard, *The Coming War with Japan*, St Martin's Press, New York, 1991, p 182.

<sup>40</sup> Michael McGwire, *Australia as a Regional Seapower: an External View*, SDSC Working Paper No.11, Australian National University, Canberra, 1979, p 16.

<sup>41</sup> 'MITI: Iraq conflict won't affect Japan fuel prices', *Asahi Evening News*, December 18, 1998, p 1.

<sup>42</sup> 'Energy in Japan', Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, September 2001, p 19.

<sup>43</sup> *Facts and Figures of Japan*, 1997 Edition, Foreign Press Center, Japan, Tokyo, 1997, p 59; while China is a net importer of oil, it exports light oil from its Daqing field for use in Japanese power plants.

<sup>44</sup> 'Editorial: Challenges in Moscow', *Asahi Online*, January 11, 2003: at [www.asahi.com/english/op-ed/K2003011100246.html](http://www.asahi.com/english/op-ed/K2003011100246.html)

next decade as Malaysia and Indonesia become net importers and imports of Chinese light oil dry up.

Japan's major LNG suppliers are located in Southeast Asia and Australia. Indonesia (37 per cent), Malaysia (20 per cent) and Australia (15 per cent) were the largest providers in 1997<sup>45</sup>. In 2000, Malaysia, Indonesia and Australia together accounted for nearly 67 per cent of Japan's LNG imports, although in that year a new contract was signed with Oman towards maintaining a diversified supply portfolio<sup>46</sup>. Japan imports half its coal from Australia (steam and coking coal in roughly equal proportions) and the remainder from North America, China and Indonesia. In 1995, of 120 million tons of iron ore imported in total, 59 million tons were from Australia, 28 million tons from Brazil and 18 million from India<sup>47</sup>. With regard to non-ferrous metals, Japan has built up a diverse network of suppliers to minimise its dependence on single-suppliers as far as possible. For example, Japan imports no more than one-fifth of its bauxite/aluminium and nickel from any one country. Among suppliers who dominate non-ferrous metal imports, Chile provides 44 per cent of Japan's copper, Russia supplies 62 per cent of palladium, while China meets 68 per cent of Japan's zinc needs. The United States is Japan's most important supplier of foodstuffs accounting for almost one-third of the \$51 billion Japan spent on imported food in 1995, including most of its soya beans<sup>48</sup>.

### 3. Exports.

In a security context, commercial exports are of lesser strategic importance during armed conflicts than imports, assuming that imports can be financed for the duration. Manufactured goods account for almost all Japan's exports (96 per cent in 1997). Three regions account for the bulk of Japan's markets (Figure 9). In 1997, Asia accounted for 42 per cent of Japan's export market; North America 29 per cent and the EU 16 per cent<sup>49</sup>. Although Sino-Japanese trade has expanded to over \$80 billion in recent years, the United States remains Japan's largest bilateral export partner, absorbing \$121 billion-worth of Japanese products in 1995; more than South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and China combined<sup>50</sup>. The United States is Japan's biggest customer for

<sup>45</sup> *Japan Almanac 1999*, Asahi Shimbunsha, Tokyo, 1998, p 121.

<sup>46</sup> 'Energy in Japan', Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, September 2001, p 28.

<sup>47</sup> Joonsoo Jon, 'Critical Non-energy Import Dependencies in North-east Asia', in Bateman and Bates (eds), *Shipping and Regional Security*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, No. 129, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1998, p 83.

<sup>48</sup> *Facts and Figures of Japan*, 1997 Edition, Foreign Press Center, Japan, Tokyo, 1997, p 41.

<sup>49</sup> *Japan Almanac 1999*, Asahi Shimbunsha, Tokyo, 1998, p 116.

<sup>50</sup> *Facts and Figures of Japan*, 1997 Edition, Foreign Press Center, Japan, Tokyo, 1997, p 48.

passenger cars, integrated circuits, computers, automotive parts, machine tools and cameras.

**Figure 9:** Japan’s export markets by region (percentage of overall export value)

	1960	1970	1980	1997
Asia	32.2	28.5	28.1	42
W. Asia	3.5	2.8	10.1	-
N. America	29.7	33.7	26	29.3
EU/E. Europe	-	-	-	16.5
Latin America	7.5	6.1	6.9	5
Middle East	-	-	-	2.9
Oceania	4.9	4.2	3.4	2.4
Africa	8.7	7.4	6.2	1.3
Ex-USSR	-	-	-	0.6
W. Europe	11.7	15	16.5	-
Comecon	1.6	2.3	2.8	-

Source: METI/*Japan Almanac 1999*, Asahi Shimbunsha, Tokyo, 1998, p 116.

**III. Maritime transportation and Japan.**

Shipping performs the function of a ‘conveyor belt’ for Japan’s economy, drawing in energy, raw materials and food from around the world and distributing manufactured products to overseas markets. While one quarter of Japan’s trade by value is now carried by air, maritime transport accounted for 99.74 per cent of Japan’s total trade volume of over 800 million tons in 1996. Japan’s major ports are clustered around its central Pacific coast and the Inland Sea (*seto naikai*). Compared with South Korea or the Russian Far East, this gives Japan better protection against any attempt to block access to the Sea of Japan, which shares some of the characteristics of a chokepoint, being ringed by several narrow straits. Presently, the five largest ports in terms of cargo handled are, in descending order, Chiba, Kobe, Nagoya, Yokohama and Mizushima.

Coastal shipping has played a traditionally important role in Japan’s domestic transportation network. During the *sakoku* period of ‘national seclusion’ (1639-1854), when international trade and travel were strictly limited and controlled by the Shogunate, the economic importance of shipping was still such that a law restricting ship construction to under 1,000 *koku* (49 gross tons) was revised to allow larger ships to ply trade along Japan’s coasts. While this dependence on shipping for domestic commerce has been diminished by the expansion of road and rail infrastructure, coastal shipping still accounts for nearly 42 per cent of the volume of goods transported



domestically<sup>51</sup>. After 1945, Japan's emergence as a global mercantile power was dependent on the development of a large, Japanese-owned merchant fleet. Prime Minister Ikeda Hayato's goal of doubling national income during the 1960s was accompanied by an unprecedented expansion of the merchant fleet in order to boost trade. During 1963-67, oil tanker tonnage expanded at an average of 22 per cent per year, and non-tanker tonnage by 12 per cent. As a result of this construction boom, Japan was able to meet increased import demand for oil, which increased at an average annual rate of 18 per cent; imported dry cargo, which grew by 19 per cent; and dry cargo exports which expanded by 12.5 per cent<sup>52</sup>.

### 1. Merchant fleet.

In 2001, according to the United Nations, Japan's merchant fleet totaled 14.6 million gross registered tons (GRT)<sup>53</sup>. After contracting from a peak of 40 million GRT in 1984, gross tonnage has stabilised since the mid-1990s in the range of 13-14 million GRT<sup>54</sup>. The total fleet is divided into oil tankers (3.3 million GRT), bulk carriers (3.1 million), general cargo ships (2 million), container ships (0.6 million) and other types (5.6 million)<sup>55</sup>.

As of 1999, Japan operated around 214 petroleum tankers, divided between smaller specialised tankers and Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs) -- supertankers that range from 160,000 to over 300,000 deadweight tons (DWT)<sup>56</sup>. The recent trend has been towards building smaller double-hulled VLCCs of around 230,000 DWT, purpose built to comply with under-keel clearance draft restrictions that apply to vessels transitting the Straits of Malacca. Some Japanese shipping companies are negotiating for a further allowance of 0.5 metres<sup>57</sup>. Breaking down the remainder of the ocean-going fleet by vessel type, in 1999, there were 146 bulk carriers, 49 general purpose cargo ships, 13 chemical tankers, 16 combination bulk carriers, four combination ore/oil carriers, 25

<sup>51</sup> Japan Shipowners' Association figures: [www.jsanet.or.jp/english/ed3-4.html](http://www.jsanet.or.jp/english/ed3-4.html).

<sup>52</sup> 'K'-line company history: [www.kline.co.jp/profile/e\\_milestones3.htm](http://www.kline.co.jp/profile/e_milestones3.htm).

<sup>53</sup> Gross tonnage is a measurement of space used for cargo and passenger vessels arrived at by dividing the volume of a ship in cubic feet by one hundred; only vessels above 1,000 GRT are included in the total given.

<sup>54</sup> *Japan: A Country Study*, United States Federal Research Division, Library of Congress/Department of the Army, Washington D.C., 1992, p 240.

<sup>55</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, *Review of Maritime Transport, 2002*, United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2002, p 127.

<sup>56</sup> Tanker capacity is measured in deadweight tons, which refers to the weight of cargo and fuel carried, measured in metric tons.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Captain Osuka Yoshihiro, Asst. General Manager, Marine Safety and Environmental Team, 'K'-Line, Tokyo, February 28, 2002.



container ships, 45 LNG carriers, 22 refrigerated cargo ships, 48 roll-on/roll-off ferries, nine passenger ships and 60 vehicle carriers.

Among the recommendations of the *Report on Comprehensive National Security*, commissioned by Prime Minister Ohira Masayoshi in April 1979, were that the Japanese government should ‘Examine alternative marine routes in case a situation occurs in which existing routes, such as the Malacca and Lombok straits, are blocked to traffic (and) secure a constant volume of marine transport capacity’<sup>58</sup>. However, Japan has since followed the international trend towards increased use of open registry (‘flags of convenience’) provided by Panama, Liberia and the Bahamas, as a means of reducing costs. According to the Japanese Shipowners’ Association, more than 90 per cent of Japan’s ocean-going merchant fleet were foreign-registered ships on charter in 1998. This phenomenon was aggravated by the sharp appreciation of the yen after 1985, which saw Japanese shipping giants such as Nippon Yusen Kaisha (NYK) and Mitsui O.S.K. Lines accumulate debts of up to \$1 billion on their trans-pacific cargo routes. As well as resorting to foreign registry as a means to cut overheads, Japanese shipping firms have made massive cuts in the number of their Japanese employees. In 1994, the merchant fleet carried 70 per cent of the country’s imports and 43 per cent of exports. When foreign charters were excluded from this total, just 23 per cent of imports and 3.8 per cent of exports were carried in Japanese hulls<sup>59</sup>. Only 20 years previously, Japanese-flagged vessels carried 44 per cent of imports and 27 per cent of exports<sup>60</sup>.

Assuming that a sufficient quantity of Japanese-flagged, chartered or foreign-registered vessels continued to service Japan’s import needs in the event of a major security crisis, substantial scope would appear to exist for shipping to divert around most localised obstructions at chokepoints located in Middle-Eastern or Southeast Asian waters, albeit generating higher transportation costs. While higher costs would provide an obvious incentive, in terms of profitability, for shipping companies to add capacity to routes servicing Japan, their willingness (or that of seamen’s unions) to sail in the face of increased risk or the withdrawal of insurance cover is highly problematic, as is explored in Chapters Two and Five. Moreover, the absence in post-war Japan of any Naval Control of Shipping legislation, owing to political sensitivities over the influence of the

<sup>58</sup> *Report on Comprehensive National Security* (Translation), Comprehensive National Security Study Group, July 2, 1980, p 58.

<sup>59</sup> Ministry of Transport and *Facts and Figures of Japan*, 1997 Edition, Foreign Press Center, Japan, Tokyo, 1997, p 66.

<sup>60</sup> Linton Wells II, ‘The Sea and Japan’s Strategic Interests 1975-1985’, John Hopkins University PhD thesis, Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1975, p 325.

military, denies the Japanese government any legal instrument to compel even Japanese-flagged merchant ships to sail.

## 2. Shipping routes.

Japan's most important regular shipping routes fall into three broad streams. First, and economically most important, is the southwest stream (composed of several interlinking sea lanes) connecting Japan with Europe, the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Second, a southern stream connects Japan with Australasia and the South Pacific. Third, the trans-pacific 'Great Circle' route connects Japan with the Americas<sup>61</sup>.

Although peacetime patterns of trade and import dependence are not synonymous with wartime needs, assuming that scope exists both to switch to alternative sources of supply and alternative shipping routes, for an economy as dependent upon imported energy resources and raw materials as Japan's, they are still likely to have a major influence on its strategic needs in the event of a sustained maritime conflict. Oil remains the most strategic commodity of all for Japan, and attempts at diversifying its supply base and its impressive stockpiles notwithstanding, shipping routes from Japan to the Gulf would assume particular importance in any medium- to long-term security crisis for Japan, although several alternative routes exist within this southwestern 'stream', as is explored below. Maintaining supplies of mineral fuels and metallic ores from Australia and South-east Asia would also be important. The disruption of food imports would have a less acute security impact, reflecting the much greater substitution options available. However, it is significant that the "disruption of sea lanes" was mentioned among "conceivable threats to Japan's food security" in the 1979 *Report on Comprehensive National Security*<sup>62</sup>.

Of Japan's three maritime transportation streams, the trans-pacific Great Circle and central Pacific routes traverse mostly open ocean or coastal areas that are sparsely populated and which -- since the end of the Cold War -- have been largely free of geopolitical tensions. However, the two other major streams are geographically encumbered by several chokepoints, in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, where shipping is concentrated into narrow waterways, close to areas where political instability and regional conflict are prevalent.

<sup>61</sup> The Great Circle Route highlights the distortions of the Mercator Projection in depicting relative distances beyond the Equator.

<sup>62</sup> *Report on Comprehensive National Security* (Translation), Comprehensive National Security Study Group, July 2, 1980, p 11.

Those used for transporting significant proportions of Japanese commerce include the straits of Malacca, Lombok and Makassar and, to a lesser extent, Sunda -- all of which fall wholly or partly within Indonesian archipelagic waters. Although 1,800 nautical miles (nm) from north to south, the South China Sea itself can be considered as a chokepoint, reflecting the partial constriction of its southern, eastern and northern egress points. The Sea of Japan and the Taiwan Strait -- though the latter is not a significant route for Japan's trade except with Taiwan and Chinese mainland points opposite -- can also be considered chokepoints. In the Middle East, the Suez Canal is an artificial chokepoint, but the most important is the Strait of Hormuz.

### 2.1 Southeast Asian chokepoints.

In 1993, Japan imported 385 million tons worth \$102 billion through Southeast Asia's major SLOC, representing 42 per cent of total import value, or 4 per cent of GDP. It also exported 33.6 million tons worth over \$153 billion, representing 42.5 per cent of total exports, or 6 per cent of GDP. Only Australia rivals Japan's level of dependence on Southeast Asian SLOC. Comparable figures for Australia, on much lower volumes, were 39.5 per cent of export value and 53 per cent of import value<sup>63</sup>. China, for example, relied on Southeast Asian chokepoints for 22 per cent of its export value and just 10 per cent of its import value -- although the impressive expansion of China's trade since 1993 has also increased the importance of Southeast Asia's SLOC to China.

**Figure 10:** Japan's imports through Southeast Asian chokepoints (1993)

SLOC	per cent import value	value (\$ billion)	million tons
Malacca	29	71.5	240
Sunda	0.5	1	9
Lombok	2.5	5.5	69.5
South China Sea	40	96	305
Combined total	42	101.5	385

Source: John Noer and David Gregory, *Chokepoints: Maritime Economic Concerns in Southeast Asia*, National Defense University Press/Center for Naval Analyses, Washington, 1996, Appendix A, p 67.

<sup>63</sup> John Noer and David Gregory, *Chokepoints: Maritime Economic Concerns in Southeast Asia*, National Defense University Press/Center for Naval Analyses, Washington D.C., 1996, pp 23-26.



**Figure 11:** Japan’s exports through Southeast Asian chokepoints (1993)<sup>64</sup>

SLOC	% export value	value (\$ billion)	million tons
Malacca	27.5	99.5	12
Sunda	0.1	0.5	0.1
Lombok	2.5	9	3
South China Sea	41.5	150	32
Combined total	42.5	153.5	33.5

i) Straits of Malacca.

The Straits of Malacca (composed of the Malacca Strait, the Phillip Channel and the Singapore Strait) are the most important waterways for Japanese trade outside of Japan’s territorial waters, leading to the straits’ description as “the most crucial to the economic life of Japan”<sup>65</sup>. The straits connect the Indian Ocean (via the Andaman Sea) to the Pacific (via the South China Sea). From their northernmost and widest extremity, between Thailand and the Indonesian island of Sumatra, to their exit into the South China Sea east of Singapore, the straits extend for over 500 miles, with widths varying from 200 to just three miles.

At its narrowest point, the commanding width of the navigable channel is only 500 metres, with a commanding depth of 23 metres<sup>66</sup>. In certain shipping lanes within the straits, draft is as little as 16 metres<sup>67</sup>. (For a map of the straits and the Traffic Separation Scheme in operation there, see Map 10, Chapter Six). Despite these canal-like parameters (Suez is 21 metres deep and 300 metres across) the Straits of Malacca are the busiest waterways in the region and second only to the Dover Strait in the world. Traffic through the straits is also forecast to grow by 5 per cent annually through to 2010<sup>68</sup>. Estimates of the straits’ overall usage vary between 30,000 and 100,000 ships per year, depending on the date of the estimate and whether cross-straits traffic is included. The likely figure for inter-regional traffic through the straits is around 50,000

<sup>64</sup> Source: John Noer and David Gregory, *Chokepoints: Maritime Economic Concerns in Southeast Asia*, National Defense University Press/Center for Naval Analyses, Washington, 1996, Appendix A, p 67.  
<sup>65</sup> Ouchi Kazuomi. ‘Making the Straits Safer: A User’s View of Alternative Routes’, paper given at the International Conference on the Strait of Malacca: Meeting the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Malaysian Institute of Maritime Affairs, June 14 and 15, 1994, p 1.  
<sup>66</sup> Henry J. Kenny, *An Analysis of Possible Threats to Shipping in Key Southeast Asian Sea Lanes*, Center for Naval Analyses Occasional Paper, Alexandria, Virginia, February 1996, p 2; and H Djalal, *Indonesia and the Law of the Sea*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1995, p 355.  
<sup>67</sup> ‘Energy Security and Sealane Disruption’, Australian Energy News, Issue 24, June 2002; at [www.industry.gov.au/resources/netetenergy/aen/aen24/6enrgy.html](http://www.industry.gov.au/resources/netetenergy/aen/aen24/6enrgy.html)  
<sup>68</sup> United Nations estimate, quoted by Singaporean Defence Minister David Lim, ‘Singapore hosts 16-nation naval exercises’, Reuters News Service, June 12, 2001.

transits per year, yielding a daily average of around 137 ships. The value of trade passing in both directions is estimated at \$500 billion<sup>69</sup>. In 1993, a daily average of around 30 tankers passed through the straits in both directions, with crude oil estimated to account for 58 per cent of cargo tonnage in the straits<sup>70</sup>. According to more recent data, in 2000, a total of 17,579 tankers of all sizes carried petroleum products through the straits, yielding a daily average of 48 transits.

According to the US Department of Energy, the volume of petroleum estimated to pass through the Straits of Malacca daily is 10.3 million barrels, a total surpassed only by the Straits of Hormuz<sup>71</sup>. VLCCs from the Gulf typically carry around 2 million barrels, implying that as few as six fully-laden VLCCs could technically carry all of the oil normally passing through the straits, although the large number of terminals to be serviced in Northeast Asia requires tankers in greater numbers<sup>72</sup>. In addition, over 3,000 LNG carriers passed through the straits in 2000. As a result of an Under-keel Clearance scheme introduced in the straits since 1981, laden VLCCs exceeding 230,000 DWT have since been diverted through the Lombok Strait. About 72 per cent of laden tankers passing from the Gulf to Northeast Asian destinations are thought to use the straits. Larger VLCCs and Ultra-Large Crude Carriers (ULCCs) have to divert through the Lombok Strait<sup>73</sup>.

Japan remains the largest user. In 1993, with combined west and eastbound trade worth \$170 billion, Japanese cargoes accounted for 37 per cent of all inter-regional tonnage passing through the straits in either direction<sup>74</sup>. Around \$100 billion of this, or 27.5 per cent of Japan's total exports, travelled through the Straits of Malacca in 1993, amounting to 12.2 million tons (Figure 10). Japan owned 28 per cent of tonnage transitting the straits in that year -- four times as much as any other user, although a diminishing proportion of such vessels are Japanese-flagged<sup>75</sup>. While China's rapidly

<sup>69</sup> 'India begins patrolling Malacca Straits', The Hindu Online, April 20, 2002: [www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/2002/04/20/stories/2002042002901100.htm](http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/2002/04/20/stories/2002042002901100.htm)

<sup>70</sup> John Noer and David Gregory, *Chokepoints: Maritime Economic Concerns in Southeast Asia*, National Defense University Press/Center for Naval Analyses, Washington D.C., 1996, pp 56-58.

<sup>71</sup> 'Energy Security and Sealane Disruption', Australian Energy News, Issue 24, June 2002; at [www.industry.gov.au/resources/netenergy/aen/aen24/6enrgy.html](http://www.industry.gov.au/resources/netenergy/aen/aen24/6enrgy.html)

<sup>72</sup> 'World Oil Transit Chokepoints', Energy Information Administration, US Department of Energy, November 2002, p 2, 5 at: [www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/choke.html](http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/choke.html)

<sup>73</sup> The draft of the Straits of Malacca is deep enough to accommodate even the largest, 500,000 DWT ULCCs making the outward-bound journey to the Middle East with ballast (Chia Lin Sien, in Hamzah (ed.), *The Straits of Malacca: International Co-operation in Trade, Funding and Navigational Safety*, Maritime Institute of Malaysia/Pelanduk Publications, Kuala Lumpur, 1997, p 104.

<sup>74</sup> John Noer and David Gregory, *Chokepoints: Maritime Economic Concerns in Southeast Asia*, National Defense University Press/Center for Naval Analyses, Washington D.C., 1996, p 10.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. Appendix A, p 68.



rising oil imports are likely to erode Japan's position as the number one tanker user over time, Japan has until recent times accounted for up to 70 per cent of all the oil shipped through the strait, followed by South Korea, China and Taiwan. Japan, in turn, relies on the straits for a similar proportion of its oil, with most of the remainder being routed via the Lombok Strait<sup>76</sup>. In spite of the high volume of oil bound for Japan via the straits, surprisingly few VLCC transits are required: of 2,148 tankers monitored through the strait from the Middle East during 1995, 969 were bound for Japan, while a 1994 estimate puts the number of fully-laden large tankers bound for Japan slightly lower at around 700 per year -- or just two per day<sup>77</sup>. Such a figure is basically consistent with Japan's daily consumption of 5.44 million barrels of oil in 2001, although the import of specialist fuels requires a larger number of smaller, specialist tankers to meet Japan's daily needs.

## ii) Sunda Strait.

After the Straits of Malacca, the Sunda Strait, separating Java and Sumatra, is the second-most direct route for shipping passing from the northern Indian Ocean to the South China Sea, involving an additional 630 nm -- or about two days' steaming. Sunda is about 50 nm long and passage to the South China Sea is gained through the Gaspar or Karimata Straits. For cargoes bound from the Cape of Good Hope and other southern Indian Ocean destinations, the Sunda Strait is the most direct route for traffic to and from Northeast Asia, although trade volumes are miniscule compared with the Straits of Malacca. In 1993, Japan received 9 million tons of imports through the Strait, mostly coal, coke and iron ore from Africa. About one-quarter of two-way tonnage through the Strait was bound to or from Japan in 1993. Although the strait is relatively wide at about twelve miles across, draft is limited to 18 metres in places and strong currents hamper navigation to a greater degree than in the Straits of Malacca. Ships exiting the strait must also negotiate hazardous offshore oil installations in the Java Sea<sup>78</sup>. As a result, most ships displacing in excess of 100,000 DWT use either Malacca or Lombok. If used as an alternative to the Straits of Malacca, Sunda would add around 8.5 per cent to the

<sup>76</sup> Ouchi Kazuomi, 'Making the Straits Safer: A User's View of Alternative Routes', paper given at the International Conference on the Strait of Malacca: Meeting the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Malaysian Institute of Maritime Affairs, June 14 and 15, 1994; and Akaha Tsuneo, *Japan in Global Ocean Politics*, University of Hawaii Press and Law of the Sea Institute, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1985, p 19.

<sup>77</sup> Ouchi Kazuomi, 'Making the Straits Safer: A User's View of Alternative Routes', paper given at the International Conference on the Strait of Malacca: Meeting the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Malaysian Institute of Maritime Affairs, June 14 and 15, 1994, p 4.

<sup>78</sup> John McBeth, 'Troubled Waters', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 29, 1994 and January 5, 1995, p 19; and H Djalal, *Indonesia and the Law of the Sea*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1995, p 357.



cost of a one-way voyage<sup>79</sup>. (Until 1992, when the United States closed its bases in the Philippines, Sunda also connected US bases there with Diego Garcia, in the Indian Ocean<sup>80</sup>).

iii) Lombok-Makassar.

The Lombok strait separates Bali and Lombok and connects with the Makassar Strait to the north. Lombok-Makassar is the second most important strait in Southeast Asia for Japan's trade, with half of the total tonnage observed in the strait in 1993 bound to or from Japanese ports<sup>81</sup>. Combined passage through the two straits is 660 nm. Both straits offer a minimum width of 11 miles and unlimited draft. For this reason, Lombok-Makassar is the favoured deep-water alternative to the Straits of Malacca<sup>82</sup>. According to Chia (in Hamzah ed., 1997), the volume of oil shipped to Japan from the Middle East is evenly split between Lombok and Straits of Malacca (the larger size of vessels meaning fewer are required). However, Noer and Gregory estimate that only 5.5 million tons of crude was shipped through the Strait in 1993 (in eight VLCC transits and 29 smaller tankers)<sup>83</sup>. Iron ore and coke shipments from Australia account for most of the cargo moved through the Strait.

To cover the extra 1,014 nm between Malacca and Lombok requires three days steaming and adds 13.5 per cent to shipping costs. The Lombok route offers potential economies of scale because its deeper draft enables passage of ULCCs above 300,000 DWT. However, such gargantuan designs appear no longer to be favoured by tanker operators, given that the prevailing draft at most off-loading terminals would not accommodate them<sup>84</sup>. Despite the efforts of the Indonesian authorities to attract tanker traffic (and associated revenues) by installing mooring buoys and refuelling facilities off Ampenan, the main port in Lombok, the shift away from ULCC designs may reduce

<sup>79</sup> Russ Swinnerton, 'A Description of Regional Shipping Routes: Navigational and Operational Considerations', *Maritime Studies*, No. 87, March/April 1996, pp 10-22.

<sup>80</sup> D.P. Djalal, *The Geopolitics of Indonesia's Maritime Territorial Policy*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1996, p 130.

<sup>81</sup> John Noer and David Gregory, *Chokepoints: Maritime Economic Concerns in Southeast Asia*, National Defense University Press/Center for Naval Analyses, Washington D.C., 1996, p 12.

<sup>82</sup> Chia Lin Sien in Hamzah (ed.). *The Straits of Malacca: International Co-operation in Trade, Funding and Navigational Safety*, Maritime Institute of Malaysia/Pelanduk Publications, Kuala Lumpur, 1997, p 107.

<sup>83</sup> John Noer and David Gregory, *Chokepoints: Maritime Economic Concerns in Southeast Asia*, National Defense University Press/Center for Naval Analyses, Washington D.C., 1996, p 61.

<sup>84</sup> According to Swinnerton significant fuel, operating and crewing cost savings are generated when a 550,000 ton tanker passing through Lombok is compared with the 2.75 journeys it would require for a 200,000 tanker to move an equivalent cargo through the Malacca Strait -- notwithstanding the limited number of VLCCs and extra capital and terminal costs involved ('A Description of Regional Shipping Routes: Navigational and Operational Considerations', *Maritime Studies*, No. 87, March/April, 1996, pp 17-19).



further the number of tankers transitting the Strait<sup>85</sup>. However, Lombok remains the principal route for bulk carriers sailing from western Australia to Japan.

In the event of the Straits of Malacca being closed, most Japanese tankers would have to pass through the Lombok Strait. According to one Japanese estimate, this would require an extra 15 tankers and add approximately \$88 million to the annual import bill. Based on an oil import bill of \$35 billion in 1997, this would amount to roughly 0.3 per cent of the total<sup>86</sup>. Another source puts the per-ship cost for the entire detour through Lombok at \$200,000-300,000<sup>87</sup>. Among Japan's shipping firms, 'K'-line has studied re-routing options in case of a closure of the Straits of Malacca and maintains adequate bunker reserves to make the two-day diversion via the Sunda strait, in the case of shallow-draft vessels, or otherwise via the Lombok Strait. In a worst-case scenario, the company has looked at a southerly route through the archipelago via Maluku, but has not considered the far longer diversion south about Australia<sup>88</sup>.

#### iv) South China Sea.

In 1993, commercial transits through the South China Sea totalled 36,000 according to Noer and Gregory's estimate<sup>89</sup>. Although not as enclosed as the Mediterranean, to which it has been compared, it shares some chokepoint characteristics (see Map 2). According to Kawamura (1998), owing to the shallowness of the sea surrounding the Spratly Islands, the South China Sea for practical purposes is a "sea lane where ships move primarily along the continental shelf"<sup>90</sup>. Southern access is through the Malacca, Sunda or Lombok Straits. Eastern access is via the Sulu Sea. Northern access is via the Luzon Strait/Bashi channel and the Taiwan Strait. Shipping normally passes west of the Spratlys. The composition of shipping and cargoes bound to and from Japan via the South China Sea is basically the same as the Straits of Malacca and Sunda. During

<sup>85</sup> Chia Lin Sien in Hamzah (ed.), *The Straits of Malacca: International Co-operation in Trade, Funding and Navigational Safety*, Maritime Institute of Malaysia/Pelanduk Publications, 1997, pp 116-119.

<sup>86</sup> Akimoto Kazumine, Re-routing Options and Consequences: "Safeguarding Seaborne Trade in Straits and Archipelagic Regimes", Conference paper given at the 13th International Conference on Sea Lines of Communications, Canberra, April 2001.

<sup>87</sup> John McBeth, 'Troubled Waters', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 29, 1994 and January 5, 1995, p 19.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with Captain Yoshihiro Osuka, Asst. General Manager, Marine Safety and Environmental Team, 'K'-Line (Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha), Tokyo, February 28, 2002.

<sup>89</sup> John Noer and David Gregory, *Chokepoints: Maritime Economic Concerns in Southeast Asia*, National Defense University Press/Center for Naval Analyses, Washington D.C., 1996, p 56.

<sup>90</sup> Kawamura Sumihiko, 'Shipping and Seaborne Trade -- Regional Security Interests', *The Kawamura Papers*, The Kawamura Institute, Chiba, Japan, November 1998, p 108.



typhoon season, shipping using Lombok-Makassar enters the South China Sea via the Sulu Sea/Basilan Strait, south of Mindanao.

**Map 2: The South China Sea and island groups**

**South China Sea Islands**



Source: CIA/University of Texas

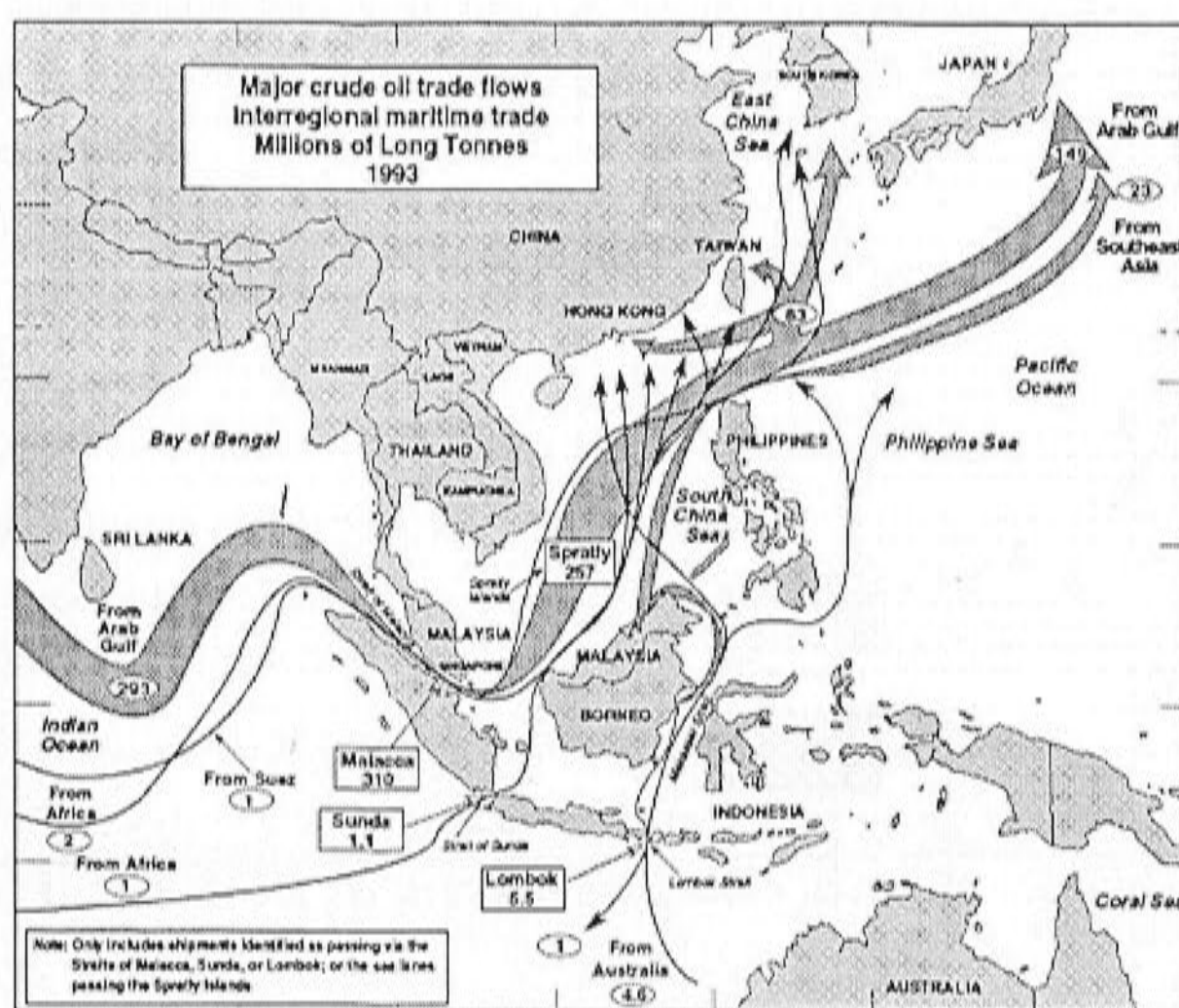
The cost to Japan of a 12-month closure of the South China Sea, diverting oil tankers via the Lombok Strait and east of the Philippines, has been estimated at \$200 million. A Japanese estimate puts the cost as basically the same to that imposed by a closure of the



Malacca Strait -- requiring 15 additional tankers to be added to the route and an extra \$88 million in shipping costs. This is roughly corroborated by the reported findings of a joint study conducted by the Japan Defense Agency and the Indonesian authorities in the late 1980s that put the number of extra tankers required to divert around the South China Sea, via Lombok and east of the Philippines, at 18<sup>91</sup>.

**Map 3: Oil shipment routes and volumes through Maritime Southeast Asia**

Interregional maritime crude oil shipments: Millions of Long Tonnes (MLT)



Source: John H. Noer with David Gregory, *Chokepoints: Maritime Economic Concerns in Southeast Asia*, National Defense University Press/Center for Naval Analyses, Washington, 1996, p. 18.

v) Ombai-Wetar.

Also within Indonesian waters, the Ombai passage, between Timor and the Alor islands, is wide and deep and for this reason is believed to be the favoured route for American submarines passing between the Pacific and the Indian Ocean. The interconnecting Wetar passage runs between the Arafura Sea and Flores Sea. Ombai-Wetar could be a significant diversionary route for Japanese commercial traffic if other passages were blocked, providing equidistant passage for Australian exports from the north and west to

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Admiral Sunardi, Republic of Indonesia Navy, Jakarta, March 2000.

Japan and it is deep enough to take VLCCs<sup>92</sup>. Further east, the Torres Strait poses navigational hazards for vessels over 50,000 tons<sup>93</sup>. For Japan's iron ore shipments forced to divert from northwestern Australia around Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, transportation costs would increase by 15-20 per cent<sup>94</sup>.

In a worst-case scenario whereby the Indonesia archipelago was closed to international shipping, shipping from the Middle East and Europe to Japan could divert around Australia, although this would double the mileage compared with the Straits of Malacca route. Japanese estimates from the 1980s claim that shipping distances would be increased by up to 78 per cent if tankers were forced to sail around Australia<sup>95</sup>. Noer and Gregory estimate that \$1.5 billion would be added to Japan's annual oil import bill, compared with Akimoto's calculation of \$1.2 billion<sup>96</sup>.

## 2.2 Middle Eastern chokepoints.

The voyage between Japan and Gulf oil terminals typically takes 20 days each way<sup>97</sup>. The distance from Yokohama to Aden, via the Straits of Malacca, is 6,535 nm (see Map 4). The Strait of Hormuz sits at the mouth of the Gulf, where Japanese tankers were repeatedly attacked during the Iran-Iraq War of 1980-1988. A total of 13 million barrels per day is estimated to flow through the strait. Japan has a considerable stake in freedom of navigation through the Strait of Hormuz, and accounts for around 20 per cent of all tanker tonnage. The strait is strategically important owing to the non-availability of alternative tanker routes to access Gulf oil terminals (although there are alternative pipeline routes). Shipping passes through 2-mile wide lanes in either direction.

<sup>92</sup> B.R. Victor, 'Denial of Passage Rights in the Indonesian Archipelago -- Australian Implications', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, February 1994, p 45.

<sup>93</sup> David Shilling, 'A Reassessment of Japan's Naval Defense Needs', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 16 No. 3 (March 1976), p 226.

<sup>94</sup> Hector J. Donohue, 'Protection of Sea Lines of Communications -- Potential for Regional Co-operation in the Western Pacific' *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, May 1990, pp 57-64.

<sup>95</sup> Akaha Tsuneo, 'Japan's Response to Threats of Shipping Disruptions in Southeast Asia and the Middle East', *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 2, Summer 1986, p 266.

<sup>96</sup> Akimoto Kazumine, 'Re-routing Options and Consequences: Safeguarding Seaborne Trade in Straits and Archipelagic Regimes', Conference paper given at the 13th International Conference on Sea Lines of Communications, Canberra, April 2001.

Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1975, p 190.



**Map 4:** Indian Ocean and Middle-East chokepoints**Indian Ocean Area**

802126 (R00367) 5-93

However, the Strait of Hormuz is wide enough, despite overlapping maritime territorial claims by riparian states, for the extension of territorial seas to 12 nm under the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention not to have changed its international status. Moreover, its importance to global oil supplies makes it an area of international security concern. Closure of the Suez Canal, which is economically significant to Japan only for the container trade, would require diversion via the Cape of Good Hope, adding an additional ten days' steaming, or 23 per cent to the cost of exports shipped from Yokohama to Rotterdam. In February 2003, Japanese firms including Nissan, Sony and



Murata Manufacturing were reported to be considering diverting shipments to Europe normally routed through Suez via the Cape route, in response to an increased risk of a terrorist attack on the canal, in the context of US military action threatened against Iraq<sup>98</sup>.

### **Conclusion.**

This chapter has surveyed Japan's maritime geography and economic structure and concluded that stockpiling, substitution, diversification and other economic contingency measures have not altered the defining characteristics of Japan's international political economy. These are its poor natural resource allocation, resulting import dependence and a large population relative to domestic food production.

Since industrialisation, Japan's poor resource endowment has determined its international political economy, as the need to access overseas industrial and energy commodities, and food, has defined the central imperative of its foreign policy and security concerns. Globalisation and the transnationalisation of production under the control of multinationals have made maritime trade important to all advanced industrial economies. While Japan's economic geography bears comparison with that of Taiwan and South Korea, it is important to note that Japan's dependence on imported commodities is on a far larger scale and the risks attached to supply disruption thus carry a very high premium for Japanese policy-makers.

Stockpiling measures put in place in the 1970s serve to give the country a combined public-private cushion equivalent to five months' oil consumption in the civilian sector under normal conditions; a period that could probably be extended if austerity controls were enacted immediately. However, the comparatively lean energy consumption profile of industry since the oil crisis also means that there is limited latitude to implement austerity measures without affecting production, while the growth of automotive transport makes it more difficult to reduce dependence on petroleum. If Japan were to switch to an austerity footing, import requirements for fuels, raw materials and non-substitutable food items could be cut to around one-third or approximately 240 million tons, based on the 720 million tons of goods imported in 1996. As Shilling suggests, essential import requirements could be cut further if the

---

<sup>98</sup> 'Japanese companies mull alternate distribution routes to avoid Middle East fracas', *The Nikkei Weekly*, February 10, 2003, at: [www.nni.nikkei.co.jp/AC/TNW/Search/Nni20030210FR7IRAQI.htm](http://www.nni.nikkei.co.jp/AC/TNW/Search/Nni20030210FR7IRAQI.htm). Itocho Corporation has undertaken a "detailed study" into the consequences of re-routing and increased shipping insurance premiums in the Middle East.

government decided to forego export earnings. However, the economic costs of doing so could be sustained only a temporary basis without incurring a balance of payments crisis (as of November 2002, Japan's foreign exchange reserves were equivalent to estimated import cover of 8.5 months).

The structure of Japan's international seaborne trade has created a particular economic dependence on the southwestern SLOC connecting Japan with Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Europe, and especially the Straits of Malacca -- Japan's energy 'lifeline'. Australia's role as an energy, minerals and food supplier to Japan also makes the southern SLOC strategically important, while the trans-pacific SLOC to North and South America hold great economic as well as military significance for Japan. Against the risk of a localised obstruction occurring in chokepoints along these SLOC, considerable scope exists for alternative routing, the security implications of which are taken up in Chapters Two and Six.

Having established the geographic and economic fundamentals of Japan's vulnerability to SLOC disruption, I move next, in Chapter Two, to consider the definition of SLOC security and threats to shipping in a generalised, strategic context.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Sea Lines in Strategy

#### Introduction.

This chapter explores the historical background to, and definition of, sea lines of communication (SLOC), as a strategic concept. It examines how SLOC security has evolved over the last century by drawing upon 'classical' theories of sea power, the evidence of the two world wars, the Cold War and the post-Cold War period. Japan is included to the extent that its experience is corroborative of, or runs contrary to, common patterns identified. However, the purpose of the chapter is to identify a 'universal' definition of SLOC security which can be applied in subsequent chapters to the particular perceptions and policy choices that have shaped Japan's SLOC concerns since 1940.

The security of 'sea lines of communication', a military term that has crossed over into international relations, is still widely assumed to be among the leading national security concerns of maritime commercial and naval powers, such as the United States and Japan. This is despite the fact that the last major conventional conflict at sea occurred more than 20 years ago, in the Falkland Islands -- the only occasion since 1945 that a submarine has sunk another vessel in anger. In the light of how common references to the security of SLOC -- or sea lanes -- have become, there has been little accompanying effort to define these terms conceptually or geographically.

This chapter tracks the origins of 'sea lines of communications', with reference to classical theories of sea power and how these strategic premises have been re-evaluated over two world wars, the Cold War and the decade since, which has heralded the rise of non-state threats to shipping from terrorism and piracy, and seen the definition of maritime security develop from a 'narrow' military base to encompass a broader policy agenda. The analytical focus spans economic geography, diplomacy, military science and law enforcement -- fields that must be set in general context before being subject to more detailed scrutiny in Japan's case in subsequent chapters. The historical lens used in this chapter is deliberately extended. This reflects the assumption, notwithstanding the rise of security risks posed to shipping by terrorism and piracy, that military threats (whatever their likelihood) retain the most significant potential to disrupt sea communications on a systemic scale. As long as navies, such as Japan's, continue to focus on the importance of SLOC security as a core rationale, it is necessary to take



account of the empirical record of three major strategic offensives against merchant shipping during the two world wars, which continue to cast a long shadow over doctrine and institutional memory. Japan's pre-1945 SLOC security is the subject of the following chapter, but reference to Japan's historical experience is included here to the extent that it highlights 'universal' themes. The relevance of theories of sea power formulated in the era of 'navalism' and high imperialism may appear of questionable relevance to the contemporary parameters of maritime security, given the magnitude of technical and political change in the intervening century. However, the works of Mahan and Corbett, as well as later writers such as Castex and Brodie, are helpful in distilling first principles.

### **I. Principles of sea communications.**

The importance of controlling communications is a central tenet of many classical theories of sea power. In *The Influence of Seapower Upon History, 1660-1783*, the work that from its publication in 1890 established Alfred Thayer Mahan's reputation as the doyen of sea power advocates, Mahan wrote that "certain well-worn paths" exist within the "wide common" of the sea within which ships are concentrated and vulnerable to obstruction<sup>1</sup>. Great Britain's foremost famous naval strategist, Sir Julian Corbett, was a contemporary and a critic of Mahan, whose *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy* was published in 1911. Corbett in particular asserted that "all problems of Naval Strategy can be reduced to terms of 'passage and communication'" -- a nautical term dating from the late 18th century<sup>2</sup>.

'Sea power' can be broken down into 'command of the sea', denoting a somewhat idealised state in which the freedom of movement on, above or under the sea is unchallenged and the now more widely used relative term, 'sea control', the corollary of which is 'sea denial'. Although Corbett's theory of maritime strategy was mainly concerned with the positive uses of command of the sea, he appreciated equally that the sea has a negative strategic value in terms of its denial to an enemy, which for continental powers seeking mainly to deter or delay intervention by maritime powers may of itself be a sufficient objective<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Seapower Upon History, 1660-1783*, First American Century Series Edition, Hill and Wang, New York, 1957, p 9.

<sup>2</sup> Julian S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, Naval Institute Press Classics of Sea Power Series, Annapolis, 1988, pp 315-323.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p 94.

SLOC originates from an analogy drawn with overland lines of supply -- including the fixed infrastructure of roads and railways -- used by armies to connect frontline forces with bases and production centres in the rear, in turn requiring control, or at least the benign neutrality of surrounding territory. Owing to the very different properties of water, the definition of lines of communication at sea is more relative. Corbett regarded naval strategy conceptually as a battle over sea communications for the objective of gaining control and ultimately command of the sea. However, he also realised that an analogy drawn between conquest of territory and dominance over sea space has the potential to mislead because "the sea cannot be the subject of political dominion or ownership"<sup>4</sup>. Definitional problems surrounding SLOC that risk confusing military principles of land power with those of sea power are compounded by the use of such terms as 'chokepoints', 'sea lanes', 'strategic waterways', 'trade routes', 'focal areas', 'maritime approaches' and similar terms that risk conflating principles of naval strategy with principles of market economics governing trade.

The most basic, passive, strategic quality of sea space is as a barrier to the movement of peoples and armies. The defensive advantages that separation by water offers against invasion, although latterly eroded with the advent of air power, long-range missiles or indeed 'asymmetric' terrorist attacks, still pertains to the contemporary strategic environment. Since 1945, the logistical and operational difficulties involved in mounting large-scale amphibious warfare have meant that only a select number of states have the capabilities required to do so. As a reflection of the rising costs of military action, among those who possess such capability, very few have done so against opposition; the US landings at Inchon during the 1950-53 Korean War; the Anglo-French landings at Suez in 1956 and the UK reoccupation of the Falkland Islands in 1982 being among a handful of post-war examples.

While technology continues to erode the barriers posed by distance, and non-state actors are increasingly the focus of threat perceptions, physical geography still exerts a cardinal influence on the strategic, operational and tactical levels of warfare. Australia's post-Vietnam defence doctrine has been defined with reference to the 'sea-air' gap separating it from the Indonesian archipelago<sup>5</sup>. Japan's defence white paper contains the premise that "as Japan is made up of an arch-shaped archipelago, a foreign country has to invade

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p 95.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Dibb, *Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1986.



it via sea and air”<sup>6</sup>. Further back in history, the Tsushima Strait, although separating Japan from the Korean peninsula by only 40 miles, formed a barrier that thwarted successive attempts by the Mongols to invade, even though Japan itself lacked a navy<sup>7</sup>. The Tokugawa Shogunate’s policy of maintaining national seclusion for over two hundred years would not have been possible had Japan not been an island nation. The strategic advantages for Japan of being an island nation “sealed relatively well from external threats” continue to be stressed in a contemporary context, as by Sato Seizaburo (1996) who argues that the country’s experiment with post-war pacifism is partly made possible by geography<sup>8</sup>. Buzan (1995) observes in a Japanese context that “isolationism can sometimes be a workable security policy in a way that it almost never can be for continental states”<sup>9</sup>.

In an active sense, the relative efficiency of waterborne transportation compared with overland means has afforded decisive strategic advantages -- both in terms of projecting power and conducting trade -- to those states possessing the necessary technology, resources and political foresight to construct ocean-going fleets. Militarily, as Norman Friedman has observed, sea communications have given maritime states advantages comparable to interior lines of communication on land<sup>10</sup>. Commercially, the advantages of waterborne transportation are such that it costs as much to ship one tonne of coal from Australia to Great Britain as it does to transport the same amount 150 miles within Great Britain via rail<sup>11</sup>.

Such paradoxical strategic qualities of the sea, as part-buffer and part-enabler are borne out in Great Britain’s historical experience. The narrow Channel separating the English south coast from Continental Europe proved sufficient for Great Britain to escape domination by successive continental hegemonies -- Philipine Spain, Napoleonic France and Nazi Germany -- each unable to project their superior land strength over water. Conversely, Great Britain’s access to the sea and possession of a large naval and merchant fleet paved the way for the establishment -- if more by accident than design --

<sup>6</sup> *Defense of Japan 1997*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, 1997, p 105.

<sup>7</sup> Luck was also on Japan’s side: although bad weather frustrated the Mongols’ two invasion attempts in the late 13th century, Japan was able to launch a brief but highly destructive invasion of Korea across the strait via Pusan, under Hideyoshi, from 1592-98. (Hermann Kinder and Werner Hilgemann, *The Penguin Atlas of World History*, Volume One, Penguin, 1978, p 227).

<sup>8</sup> Sato Seizaburo, ‘Clarifying the Right of Collective Self-Defense’, *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 3 No. 2, Fall/Winter 1996, pp 98-99.

<sup>9</sup> Barry Buzan, ‘Japan’s Defence Problematique’, *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 8, No.1, 1995, p 26.

<sup>10</sup> Norman Friedman, *The U.S. Maritime Strategy*, Jane’s, London, 1988, p 62.

<sup>11</sup> Eric Grove, ‘The Security of Shipping: the Global Perspective’ in Bateman and Bates (eds), *Shipping and Regional Security*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 129, SDSC, Australian National University, Canberra, 1998, p 2.



of a global trading network and overseas territorial acquisitions. While mercantilism enabled Britain strategically to 'out-flank' European continental powers, its naval superiority also enabled it to capture the overseas trade of weaker mercantile powers such as Portugal and Holland. In the countervailing case of Japan, the Tokugawa Shogunate's two centuries of reliance on the sea as a physical barrier to foreign encroachment was converted overnight into a strategic liability with the arrival of Commodore Perry's 'black ships' in Uraga Bay in 1853. Because Japan's military technology had remained in stasis during its self-imposed isolation, rapid exposure to superior Western military technology left the Shogunate little choice but to accede to trade treaties on unfavourable terms, paving the way for its downfall.

Sea power, when used to project power on land can confer decisive force multiplier effects upon an attacking force through manoeuvre and surprise. At one extreme, the Normandy landings in 1944 -- which remain the largest-scale example of maritime power projection to date -- succeeded because opposing forces were dispersed thinly along Europe's coastal periphery, affording the Allies the initiative to choose the time and place at which to mass their forces. However, the possession of maritime forces can equally give rise to a temptation to strategic 'over-stretch'. From Athens' campaign against Syracuse during the Peloponnesian Wars to the Anglo-French campaigns in the Crimea (1854-56), and the Dardenelles (1915-16), the difficulties of operating at the end of an extended seaborne supply chain with poor intelligence has given rise to many military failures, while the D-Day landings themselves were made possible only through meticulous planning and preparation and the bitter lessons of raids such as that of Dieppe. In naval strategy too, 'concentration', has long been stressed as a cardinal principle, on the basis that the military effectiveness of naval forces generally declines the further that these are deployed from their home bases (nuclear submarines being one major modern exception)<sup>12</sup>.

Mahan and Corbett rose to influence before the First World War, in a strategic context dominated by a few, mainly European naval powers. Although sea mines, submarines, aircraft and torpedoes had all been invented, the surface dimension was predominant. The major naval conflict of the era, the 1904-05 Russo-Japanese War, culminating in the epic gun-duel at Tsushima, appeared to confirm the primacy of the battle ship, reinforcing what Corbett termed the 'battle faith' of the Royal Navy, as well its

---

<sup>12</sup> Michael McGwire, 'The Geopolitical Importance of Strategic Waterways in the Asian-Pacific Regional', *Orbis*, Vol. 19, No. 3, Fall 1975, pp 1059-60.

Japanese, European and US counterparts<sup>13</sup>. This focus on the decisive battle-fleet encounter he thought distracted naval planners from the true purpose of naval strategy which is to gain control over maritime communications, rather than to annihilate enemy fleets *per se*<sup>14</sup>. However, the operational debut of new weapons such as torpedoes and sea mines, which had cost Admiral Togo Heihachiro's fleet two battleships during the blockade of the Russian Far East squadron at Port Arthur, forewarned that the battleship's supremacy was threatened and that the days of the close blockade were numbered. By 1914, the close blockade was no longer viable against the increased lethality of inshore defences. Instead, the Royal Navy opted for a distant blockade to contain the German fleet during the First World War, though at the expense of ceding it limited freedom of movement within the North Sea.

Mahan advanced the view that "The necessity of a navy ... springs ... from the existence of a peaceful shipping and disappears with it, except in the case of a nation which has aggressive tendencies"<sup>15</sup>. However, his belief in -- and prescriptions for -- achieving sea power were guided more by a deterministic and dogmatic view of naval power as an end in itself rather than being instrumentally linked to trade protection. Mahan held that a set of criteria (geographical location; physical conformity, including natural resources and climate; extent of territory; population; national character and political system) together constituted 'natural conditions' determining the development of sea power among states. However, Mahan also differentiated functionally between 'lines of communication' to support foreign military ventures such as Napoleon's offensive in Egypt and 'lines of travel', or trade routes<sup>16</sup>.

Corbett saw overland and maritime lines of communication sharing three common military purposes, as:

- 1) lines of supply;
- 2) lines of lateral communication; and
- 3) lines of retreat.

<sup>13</sup> Colin S. Gray, *The Leverage of Sea Power: The Strategic Advantages of Navies in War*, The Free Press, New York, 1992, pp 17-18.

<sup>14</sup> Julian S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, Naval Institute Press Classics of Sea Power Series, Annapolis, 1988, p 95.

<sup>15</sup> Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Seapower Upon History, 1660-1783*, First American Century Series Edition, Hill and Wang, New York, 1957, p 23.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p 9.

He further subdivided maritime communications into those required by the belligerents' fleets for supply of fuel, stores and ammunition; communications between an army overseas and its home base; trade routes (which service the resource needs of the belligerents' home bases); and 'lateral' communications between their overseas bases<sup>17</sup>. Corbett's claim that command of the sea "means nothing but the control of maritime communications, whether for commercial or military purposes"<sup>18</sup>, was echoed during the inter-war period by the French Admiral, Raoul Castex, who wrote that "The mission of maritime forces is simply to dominate lines of communications, and the achievement of that situation is normally described as having sea mastery"<sup>19</sup>. Eric Grove suggests that Corbett's attachment to the abstract appeal of 'lines of communication' may have led him astray intellectually from the premise that it is ships, rather than belts of sea, that have intrinsic strategic value<sup>20</sup>. However, it is notable that the concept of patrolled sea routes, in conjunction with the blockade of enemy ports, had been advocated by a British Admiralty committee as early as 1885, after concluding that convoying had become an "impracticable" concept<sup>21</sup>.

Commerce warfare received only peripheral attention from Mahan, who thought that it "could not be by itself alone decisive"<sup>22</sup>. Similarly, Corbett's recognition that the security of bulk imports and food had become a "a matter of life and death" for Great Britain did not sway him from his conviction that the *guerre de course* (literally, 'the war of the chase') was marginal within naval strategy. The objective of dominating the enemy's communications would be achieved by seeking out the enemy's fleet "nine times out of ten".

However, Corbett also asserted that if maritime communications are shut down and command of the sea established, then the analogy with territorial conquest is close, since economic pressure on one's enemy begins immediately, unlike on land where it only

<sup>17</sup> Julian S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, Naval Institute Press Classics of Sea Power Series, Annapolis, 1988, pp 315-323.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. xxix, p 94.

<sup>19</sup> Raoul Castex, *Strategic Theories: Selections* translated by Eugenia C. Kiesling, Naval Institute Press Classics of Seapower Series, Annapolis, 1994, p 36. Castex, though a lesser influence on naval theory is included within the scope of this study because he wrote during the inter-war period and from a national perspective more attuned to 'sea denial' strategies, unlike both Mahan and Corbett, whose focus lay more in the pursuit of 'sea command'.

<sup>20</sup> Preface by Eric J. Grove in Julian S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, Naval Institute Press Classics of Sea Power Series, Annapolis, 1988, xxxv.

<sup>21</sup> Desmond Wettern, 'Ships, not lines, must be defended', *Pacific Defence Reporter*, 1989 Annual Reference Edition, p 93.

<sup>22</sup> Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Seapower Upon History, 1660-1783* first published 1890, First American Century Series Edition, Hill and Wang, New York, 1957, pp 27-28, 481n.



follows a military result<sup>23</sup>. Corbett's apparent failure to grasp the strategic potential of the *guerre de course* may be attributed partly to the then-untested potential of the submarine as a weapon of economic blockade. Since Corbett held that "No power will incur the odium of sinking a prize with all hands" barely six years before the German Navy adopted unrestricted U-boat warfare against Allied merchant ships, it was also the product of a highly conditioned mode of thinking from the perspective of an established naval power, in which the non-lethal seizure of ships was still regarded as "more akin to a process of law ... than to a military operation"<sup>24</sup>.

Corbett saw focal areas and terminals, where concentration is unavoidable, as merchant ships' greatest point of vulnerability, but thought these could be adequately defended by a flotilla guard<sup>25</sup>. He also rejected the notion that trade routes in the open ocean were "undefended", believing that Great Britain's merchant fleet was large enough, when measured against the threat of attack from surface raiders, to ensure that sufficient imports would reach the home islands without the need to organise convoys that might otherwise dilute limited naval resources<sup>26</sup>.

## II. The world wars.

The Central Powers' North Atlantic submarine campaign during the First World War demonstrated that even in the face of a successful Allied blockade of Germany's battle fleet, a 'counter-blockade' could be mounted using submarines. The first Battle of the Atlantic revealed new vulnerabilities for maritime powers in an attrition-based conflict decided ultimately by industrial capacity and economic stamina. By breaking down the conceptual distinction between 'military' and 'commercial' shipping, the conflict eroded taboos against targeting merchant shipping and using "all means of effective maritime pressure", leading ultimately to 'unrestricted' U-boat warfare, from February 1917<sup>27</sup>.

The first Battle of the Atlantic demonstrated that a potentially decisive sea denial capability, in the submarine arm, could operate independently of forces challenging for sea control. In April 1917, a total of 852,000 tons of Allied shipping, including one-quarter of all merchant ships leaving UK ports, was lost, taking the country's domestic food stocks to within six weeks of exhaustion. The potency of the submarine is

<sup>23</sup> Julian S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, Naval Institute Press Classics of Sea Power Series, Annapolis, 1988, pp 100-101.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p 269.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. pp 261-65.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. pp 270-75.

<sup>27</sup> Raoul Castex, *Strategic Theories*: Selections translated by Eugenia C. Kiesling, Naval Institute Press Classics of Seapower Series, Annapolis, 1994, p 39.

appreciated from the small numbers of U-boats committed (a total of 199 were lost during the war), the relatively unsophisticated tactics used (single U-boats operating independently) and the partial blockade, by mine fields, of the main ingress points from Germany's North Sea U-boat pens to the Atlantic. After raids against Germany's submarine bases and despite persisting with the "proven futility" of area anti-submarine patrols, merchant losses were not properly curtailed until the convoy system was fully operational in August 1917, after being adopted belatedly in May<sup>28</sup>.

Based on his experience during the First World War, Castex (who commanded antisubmarine patrols in the Mediterranean, where Japanese Imperial Navy vessels were also operating on the Allied side) believed that acquiring a limited capacity for sea denial might be adequate, at least for a continental power, to preserve territorial gains against intervention by maritime powers. He recognised that in the age of total war, economic factors themselves had become 'military', but believed that a distinction could still be drawn between; first, 'peacetime' maritime communications as the foundation of economic wealth; and second, communications during war. The latter could be separated functionally into: i) those required to sustain a war economy; ii) those allowing forces to be moved; and iii) those fulfilling the function of internal communications under certain geographic conditions<sup>29</sup>.

Castex stressed the importance of national geography, population and the distribution of resources -- energy, raw materials and food -- in deciding the different extent to which a disruption of seaborne trade would affect states. By the 1920s, when most major navies had converted or were converting from coal to oil as their primary bunker fuel it was already clear that oil was in a category of its own among strategic commodities. Given the expectation that in future conflicts victory would flow ultimately from economic strength, "accessory concerns" such as navy-transport bureau relations, stockpiling and austerity measures to limit import demand were also recognised by Castex as linked within an overall national effort.

Although Castex maintained that the *guerre de course* could not be independently decisive, he saw the potential of the submarine and aeroplane to erode the dominance of surface fleets, and was thus a keen proponent of the submarine<sup>30</sup>. Regarding measures to protect shipping against submarines, he considered convoy to be superior to arming,

<sup>28</sup> Liddell Hart, 'History of the First World War', Redwood Burn, Trowbridge & Escher, 1977, pp 400-03.

<sup>29</sup> Raoul Castex, *Strategic Theories*: Selections translated by Eugenia C. Kiesling, Naval Institute Press Classics of Seapower Series, Annapolis, 1994, p 30.

diverting or independently routing merchant ships, stressing that convoy minimises losses, returns the initiative to the defence by maximising the potential for counter-attack and maintains the focus correctly on defending “the objects themselves rather than the space”<sup>31</sup>. Based on his experience as a practitioner in anti-submarine warfare, he rejected the concept of patrolled areas as misconceived<sup>32</sup>.

During both world wars, the Battle of the Atlantic was a contest between maritime ‘sea control’ and continental ‘sea denial’ powers. On both occasions, a maritime coalition with Great Britain and the United States at its core sought to assert sea control in order to maintain trans-atlantic communications to sustain Great Britain’s war effort and to project US military power into Europe (and in the Second World War, North Africa), against a German-led alliance that sought to sever sea communications binding the maritime coalition together. Germany’s surface fleet, while venturing out in the early phases of both wars, was unable successfully to challenge the UK and US navies for sea control in the Atlantic, leading to its confinement as a ‘fleet in being’ in the North Sea during the First World War and to its piecemeal destruction in the Second. However, by means of a strategic offensive against merchant shipping led by submarines and aided by mines and shore-based aircraft, Germany nonetheless significantly disrupted the maritime supply chain between the United States and Great Britain and between the latter and the Soviet Union.

In the Second World War, the U-boat threat was eventually stemmed, though at a cost in resources far in excess of those committed by Germany to its submarine campaign, estimated by one source at a ratio of at least 15:1<sup>33</sup>. The approximately 900 submarines of the *Kriegsmarine* at Admiral Karl von Doenitz’s disposal (781 of which were lost) sank 14.57 million tons of Allied and neutral shipping, or 60 per cent of the total<sup>34</sup>. In addition to the direct losses, this forced the Allies to divert substantial naval assets to the defence of shipping -- withholding their use for offensive applications -- and delayed the flow of men and *materiel* across the Atlantic, thus pushing back the date of the Normandy invasion from 1943.

Bernard Brodie (1943) noted that, contrary to the evidence of naval conflicts up to the Russo-Japanese war, the German anti-shipping campaigns in the Atlantic in the First and

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. pp 360-63, 372-377.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. pp 367-70.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p 368.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Poirier, ‘Sea Control and Regional Warfare’, *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, July 1993, p 64.

<sup>34</sup> John Winton, *Convoy: The Defence of Sea Trade 1890-1990*, Michael Joseph, 1983, p 319.



Second World Wars suggested that “the decision on the seas might go not to the belligerent with a stronger navy, but to the one least vulnerable to interrupted communications”<sup>35</sup>. Brodie concluded that disputed sea control had become the norm in naval warfare, as the submarine acted as an equaliser for lesser naval powers, unable to vie for command of the sea on the surface<sup>36</sup>. Brodie regarded the maintenance of transatlantic communications as a *sine qua non* of victory in the Second World War, echoing Winston Churchill’s “only real fear” of losing the Battle of the Atlantic. In total war, Brodie recognised -- as had Castex earlier -- that the outcome depended as much on the industrial capacity of the United States and Great Britain to produce sufficient shipping to compensate for losses as it did on naval strategy<sup>37</sup>.

In the Pacific theatre during the Second World War, the Japanese Imperial Navy sought to establish sea control in the Western Pacific by forcing a decisive encounter with the US main battle fleet. The rapidity of its military successes in 1941-42 disguised the country’s vulnerability to a merchant blockade until US submarines and aircraft were in a position to exploit it, in 1943-44. (Japan’s pre-1945 SLOC security is fully discussed in Chapter Three).

Brodie identified three types of defensive cover for shipping; ‘general cover’, evasive routing and direct protection<sup>38</sup>. First, general cover refers to the indirect protection conferred through command of the sea, secured by a superior naval force disposed in such a way as either to destroy or neutralise a hostile fleet-in-being. Second, against the threat of sub-surface or air attack, the most basic form of protection for merchant shipping is evasive routing except near to terminals where concentration is unavoidable<sup>39</sup>. Brodie noted that during the early phases of both world wars, merchant raiders enjoyed their greatest success by preying upon lone ships whose inexperienced or uninformed captains adhered to predictable peacetime routes. Third, of strategies aimed at direct protection, convoy presented merchant ships with greater overall security compared to single sailings.

<sup>35</sup> Bernard Brodie, *A Layman's Guide to Naval Strategy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1943, p 84.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. p 59.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. p 85.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. pp 82-103.

<sup>39</sup> There are four categories of evasive routing: unescorted convoy, random independent routing, stream routing and wave routing. (Hector J. Donohue ‘Protection of Sea Lines of Communications -- Potential for Regional Co-operation in the Western Pacific’, *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, May 1990, pp 57-64).

Since the end of the Napoleonic wars, convoy has periodically been discarded as “dull and unspectacular work” only to be resurrected belatedly in *extremis*, usually to positive effect<sup>40</sup>. During the First World War, convoy was initially resisted as logistically difficult to organise and tactically flawed by presenting a concentrated target limited to the speed of the slowest vessels in the group. However, after being introduced in May 1917 the convoy system had within five months reduced the rate of Allied shipping lost to one-quarter that of April -- and to just 1 per cent of shipping under convoy<sup>41</sup>. The United States had been an enthusiastic supporter of convoys in the First World War. By the time it entered the Second World War, valuable information on convoying routes and procedure had passed out of the Navy’s institutional memory. Only disastrous losses suffered by Allied shipping operating off the US eastern seaboard in the first half of 1942 challenged the prevailing US view that “The Navy does not like convoys. It is a purely defensive form of warfare ... in so far as enemy submarine warfare forces us to use the convoy system, we unwittingly play into his hands”<sup>42</sup>.

Once established, convoys were demonstrated during both world wars to offer the most effective protection, proving only marginally easier to detect than single ships, as well as offering the most effective means of counterattack. Convoy was, according to the authoritative post-Second World War account<sup>43</sup>, a means “not only of protecting shipping but of locating and destroying U-boats”<sup>44</sup>. Given the shortage of naval vessels available for escort duty, the concentration of merchant shipping in convoy presented the most efficient means to allocate limited resources for their protection. Of the 2,240 merchant ships lost in the Atlantic and Arctic, 63 per cent were either sailing singly or were separated from their convoys<sup>45</sup>.

Many of the lessons from the Second World War were specific to the differing geography and distribution of capabilities in the Atlantic and Pacific theatres. However, a number of general principles regarding SLOC security from both world wars can be advanced. In both conflicts a maritime coalition, based on an Anglo-US trans-atlantic

<sup>40</sup> James A. Boutilier, ‘Air Defence of Merchant Ships’, *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, Vol. 15, No. 3, August 1989, p 41.

<sup>41</sup> Liddell Hart, ‘History of the First World War’, Redwood Burn, Trowbridge & Escher, 1977, p 402.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Eric J. Grove (ed). *The Defeat of the Enemy Attack on Shipping, 1939-1945*; A Revised Edition of the (1957) Naval Staff History Volumes 1A (Text and Appendices) and 1B (Plans and Tables), The Navy Records Society/Ashgate Publishing Limited, Aldershot, 1997, p 13, 32.

<sup>43</sup> D.W. Waters’ confidential 1957 staff history *The Defeat of the Enemy Attack on Shipping, 1939-1945*, edited by Eric Grove, was released by the Navy Records Society in 1997.

<sup>44</sup> Eric J. Grove (ed). *The Defeat of the Enemy Attack on Shipping, 1939-1945*; A Revised Edition of the (1957) Naval Staff History Volumes 1A (Text and Appendices) and 1B (Plans and Tables), The Navy Records Society/Ashgate Publishing Limited, Aldershot, 1997, p 49.

<sup>45</sup> Desmond Wettren, “Ships, not lines, must be defended”, *Pacific Defence Reporter*, 1989 Annual Reference Edition, p 93.



axis, was victorious against a predominantly continental alliance. This observation excludes the fact that the Soviet Union/Russia was present as a continental ally on the Allied side to absorb most of Germany's military energy, while Japan was a key maritime power that was nonetheless defeated in the Second World War. However, the US-UK experience in the Atlantic in the world wars demonstrated that sea communications were surprisingly robust in the face of sustained military pressure, once measures for the defence of shipping (and convoy in particular) were organised. Transatlantic SLOC also yielded strategic advantages as well as vulnerabilities, allowing maritime (and air) power to be projected throughout Western Europe and North Africa and enabling strategic economies comparable to those which Germany enjoyed internally within occupied Europe. The Japanese experience showed, equally, that if inadequately defended, SLOC could lay open import-dependent belligerents to a blockade of merchant shipping that would eventually sap their industrial capacity to support modern warfare. The Allies' distant blockade of the European Central Powers in 1914-18 showed that, over time, blockade could be effective in downgrading the fighting power of even relatively autarkic continental powers.

In both world wars, attempts to institute patrolled lanes proved to be unambiguous and costly failures. In spite of the poor record of such efforts when attempted in 1916-17 off the south-west coast of Ireland, the 'Ship Lane Patrol' when mounted by the US Navy in early 1942 off the US Atlantic seaboard proved singularly unable either to locate enemy submarines or to protect merchant shipping. The introduction of convoy in the Atlantic thus corrected the "fallacious doctrine" that sea routes or sea lines of communications possessed concrete reality or strategic value independently of the ships themselves<sup>46</sup>.

Germany's submarine offensive in 1940-43, although ultimately unsuccessful, demonstrated the strategic potential of the submarine-led counter-blockade. Germany's anti-shipping campaign and that of the United States in the Pacific achieved results out of all proportion to the resources invested. Indeed, a German victory in the Battle of the Atlantic might well have been secured had more resources been committed to von Doenitz's submarine programme at an earlier stage, denying Great Britain and its allies the time to re-learn half-forgotten strategies such as convoy and bring their cumulative industrial superiority to bear.

---

<sup>46</sup> Eric J. Grove (ed). *The Defeat of the Enemy Attack on Shipping, 1939-1945*; A Revised Edition of the (1957) Naval Staff History Volumes 1A (Text and Appendices) and 1B (Plans and Tables), The Navy Records Society/Ashgate Publishing Limited, Aldershot, 1997, p 49.



During the Second World War in the Pacific, Japan benefited initially from substantial sea control yielded during the US and European retreat from Southeast Asia, as well as an island screen against the Pacific 'proper', extending south through Okinawa, Formosa/Taiwan, to the Philippine and Indonesian and Micronesian archipelagos, allowing it to maintain resource in-flows from East Asia and the South Pacific with only limited impedance until the second half of 1943. However, once the United States had overcome technical, doctrinal and logistical obstacles to employing its submarines effectively, its anti-shipping campaign from late 1943 onwards (latterly assisted by carrier and land-based aviation), proved that targeting maritime economic communications could be independently decisive. Despite possessing submarines and torpedoes technically superior to those of the United States, the Imperial Navy itself failed to exploit the potential for attacking extended US SLOC sustaining MacArthur's and Nimitz's amphibious pincer movements, respectively pushing north from Australia and west from Hawaii -- such was the strength of its 'battle faith'.

### III. The Cold War.

At the end of the Second World War, at the very moment that US Navy appeared set to emerge as the dominant naval power of the future, the introduction of nuclear weapons rendered questionable future scenarios for sustained, high-intensity conflict between maritime powers. The advent of the nuclear age threatened to make obsolete the traditional power-projection role of the US Navy. The US Navy responded to this partly technical, partly bureaucratic challenge (on the part of the Air Force) by arguing for and gaining control over the submarine component of the nuclear 'strategic triad'<sup>47</sup>. It also lobbied successfully to retain a conventional strike capability based around carrier battle groups, which have since formed the core of its post-war force structure. Until the mid-to late 1960s, US naval superiority over the Soviet Union was not questioned. Conventional military conflict between the superpowers, although planned for on the scenario of a Warsaw Pact move on western Europe and other regional flashpoints, took on proxy forms in 'wars of national liberation', in which the United States was rarely challenged at sea. As a result, logistic lines of communication across the Pacific used to sustain US interventions on the Korean Peninsula and in Vietnam were largely unimpeded.

While the importance of shipping protection in western naval planning diminished after 1945, the lessons learned and institutionally retained from the Second World War

---

<sup>47</sup> James A. Boutillier, 'Air Defence of Merchant Ships', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, Vol. 15, No. 3, August 1989, p 42.

continued to feed into western naval planning during the Cold War. This was evident from the Radford-Collins Naval Control of Shipping Agreement of 1951, which arose from discussions among senior naval officers from the United States, Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand who set out to divide the Pacific into geographical zones of responsibility for the protection of merchant shipping including such activities as convoying, safe routing and the exchange of weather information, anti-submarine warfare (ASW), search and rescue, and surveillance (the latter being subject to a further agreement in 1978)<sup>48</sup>. Organisations for the Naval Control of Shipping (NCS), spanning such activities as authorising sailings, route selection, the organisation of convoys, tactical diversions and movement reporting continued to be maintained beyond the Cold War by the United States and allies such as Australia and Singapore, manned largely by naval reservists<sup>49</sup>.

Until the mid-1960s, the Soviet Union restricted its maritime ambitions to developing a 'brown water' navy for coastal operations and to constructing its own fleet of strategic missile submarines. From the late 1960s, Western planners perceived a rising potential Soviet threat to US sea control in both the North Atlantic and North Pacific, particularly from Soviet attack submarines "primarily aimed at interdicting our sea lines of communication" used to re-supply US forward-deployed forces and those of its allies<sup>50</sup>. In response to the build-up of the Soviet Navy and the emergence of new sub-surface and air threats to the blue-water operations of US aircraft carriers and nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), initial variants of a 'maritime strategy' stressed the direct defence of US military SLOC<sup>51</sup>.

At the end of the 1970s, a far more ambitious version of the maritime strategy was developed, closely associated with Admirals John F. Lehman and James D. Watkins (appointed Secretary of the Navy and Chief of Naval Operations, respectively, under the Reagan administration) who believed that by using the superiority of the US Navy in mobile strike power to target Soviet SSBNs and other high-value targets, the Soviet Navy would be forced to divert its surface, air and submarine assets into a defensive posture within 'bastion' seas, thereby alleviating pressure upon trans-atlantic and trans-Pacific SLOC. A reactive posture of defending directly against Soviet strengths at sea

<sup>48</sup> Graham Priestnall, ANZUS and the Radford-Collins Agreement: Australia's naval mission, *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, January/March 1997, pp 49-52.

<sup>49</sup> Hector J. Donohue, 'Protection of Sea Lines of Communications -- Potential for Regional Co-operation in the Western Pacific', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, May 1990, pp 57-64.

<sup>50</sup> Testimony of Adm. Metzel to the Senate Committee on Armed Services, for Department of Defence Authorizations for FY 1980, 96th Congress, US Government Printing Office, p 2934.



and 'swinging' naval forces from one theatre to another was thus replaced by the far more radical concept of 'horizontal escalation', based on utilising forward-deployed US forces to target vulnerable sectors of Soviet military infrastructure. Beginning in 1981, a review of naval defence policy and burden-sharing conducted by the Reagan administration gave political backing to the acquisition of a '600-ship fleet'. An unprecedented peacetime defence build-up ensued, funded by a 76 per cent increase in military expenditure between 1976 and 1986, the year that the Maritime Strategy was officially announced by Admiral Watkins and adopted by the Reagan administration<sup>52</sup>.

In North-east Asia, the Maritime Strategy and 'horizontal escalation' meant that US forces would be able to open a new front in the Soviet Far East, in the event that Soviet forces threatened in areas of relative strength such as Western Europe or the Middle East. As geography was key to US calculations of relative strength vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, Japan's role assumed critical importance "as a springboard from which the United States can launch attacks against the Soviet homeland (and) ... a shield behind which the US Navy can fight Pacific battles"<sup>53</sup>. Such scenarios necessarily proceeded from the problematic assumption that a high-intensity conflict that was global in scope could be contained below the threshold of a strategic nuclear exchange. Desmond Ball (1991) argues that the escalatory pressures inherent in the Maritime Strategy could have brought a nuclear response at an early stage of any superpower clash in the Northwest Pacific<sup>54</sup>. (The importance of the Maritime Strategy and horizontal escalation to Japan's involvement in sea lane defence is explored in Chapter Five).

With the Maritime Strategy increasingly geared towards an offensive force posture, doubts were expressed about the continued relevance of Second World War-type convoys, especially in the Pacific, given the likely according of priority to trans-atlantic SLOC in any superpower conflict<sup>55</sup>. In the late 1980s, Vice Admiral J. Blouin outlined four concepts towards securing key Pacific SLOC, involving convoy, independent sailings, defended lanes and offensive operations<sup>56</sup>. In this context, the concept of patrolled SLOC was revived as an "expansion of the convoy concept":

---

<sup>51</sup> Robert Komer, *Maritime Strategy or Coalition Defense?*, University Press of America/Abt Books, Lanham, 1984, pp 61-63.

<sup>52</sup> Joseph P. Keddell, *The Politics of Defense in Japan: Managing Internal and External Pressures*, M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 1994, p 131.

<sup>53</sup> Admiral James D Watkins, 'The Maritime Strategy', The US Naval Institute, US Department of Defense, February 1986, p 482.

<sup>54</sup> Desmond Ball, 'Escalation and the Use of Nuclear Weapons', Chapter 6, 'Provocative Plans: A Critique of US Strategy for Maritime Conflict in the North Pacific', Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 79, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1991, pp 81-93.

<sup>55</sup> For example, W.L. Owen, 'Is the Convoy System Old Hat?', *Pacific Defence Reporter*, September 1985.

<sup>56</sup> 'Convoy or Defended Lanes', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, August 1989, p 56.



A protected or defended lane would involve sanitizing a geographical area against the submarine threat, followed by the installation of a barrier or protected perimeter to provide for penetration warning. ... Protective forces would be positioned along a transit route. Each unit of the protective force would be assigned an area of responsibility, the size of which depended upon the speed and sensors of the protective platform, perceived threat, environmental conditions and weapons involved<sup>57</sup>.

The credibility of patrolled lanes as conceived in the late Cold War was predicated upon the advances made since 1945 in ASW, drawing upon the combined resources of air- and sea-based patrol units and a global, remote surveillance infrastructure, based on a network of SOSUS (sound surveillance sonar system) sea-bed acoustic arrays, land-based high-frequency radio detection nets and dedicated naval reconnaissance satellites providing comprehensive optical, infra-red and signals-intelligence coverage of the oceans<sup>58</sup>. Despite such technical advances, the attachment of Pacific and NATO planners to defending sea lines of communication was criticised in some quarters as duplicating past mistakes made in respect of the abstract concept of patrolled SLOC<sup>59</sup>.

Starting in 1979, with a proposal to establish a private study group to examine SLOC security in the Asia-Pacific region, a series of bi-annual international conferences dedicated to SLOC security were inaugurated in 1982. Co-organised by the United States, Japan, South Korea, Australia, China, Taiwan and a number of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states, SLOC conferences were attended by politicians, defence officials, serving military officers and representatives from shipping firms and other maritime industries. By the end of the Cold War, the conference agenda had evolved into three main objectives, namely:

- 1) to arrive at a mutual understanding of SLOC defence;
- 2) to agree upon the methods of SLOC defence and its necessity; and
- 3) to implement practicable cooperation for SLOC defence and burden sharing<sup>60</sup>.

---

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. pp 57-58.

<sup>58</sup> See Desmond Ball and Jeffrey T. Richelson, *The Ties That Bind: Intelligence Cooperation between the UKUSA Countries*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1985.

<sup>59</sup> Desmond Wettern, "Ships, not lines, must be defended", *Pacific Defence Reporter*, 1989 Annual Reference Edition, p 90.

<sup>60</sup> Kanemaru Shin; Foreword, Malcolm J. Kennedy and Michael J. O'Connor, *Safely By Sea*, University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland, 1990, x-xi.

#### IV. Post-Cold War SLOC security.

Since the end of the Cold War, a 'narrow' military-focused paradigm of SLOC security based on great power conflict and the defence of freedom of navigation on the high seas has given way to a more comprehensive agenda, incorporating political-legal and non-military issues, such as expanding maritime sovereignty claims under the UN Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS), environmental problems and general issues of shipping safety. The definition of maritime threats has also been expanded to include non-state actors involved in terrorism and piracy. Corresponding with these shifts, the roles of navies have also undergone change increasing the number and importance of constabulary tasks and 'operations-other-than-war', such as sanctions enforcement, anti-piracy patrols, counter-terrorism, peace-keeping support, fisheries protection as well as 'benign' functions including disaster relief, search-and-rescue and naval diplomacy -- with a larger number of exercise partners than was the case during the Cold War. While deterrence has continued to be seen "as the bottom line of naval policy", the reduced risk of high-level conflict at sea has also fed into an expectation that fewer ships are required to perform a broader range of functions than was the case when Western navies planned for global superpower conflict<sup>61</sup>.

Concerns that were present but sidelined during the Cold War have since risen higher on the agenda of policy-makers. Efforts by coastal states to extend state controls beyond the three-mile limit of territorial waters formerly adhered to by most Western maritime states prompted the first of three conferences on the UN Law of the Sea Convention, which was held in 1958. However, UNCLOS did not enter into force until after the Cold War had concluded, in November 1994. Concern about threats to shipping from non-state actors long pre-dates the end of the Cold War. In 1985, the hijacking of the *Achille Lauro* cruise ship, although an isolated incident, brought modern terrorism to sea, while piracy began to attract attention as a resurgent phenomenon in Southeast Asia from the early 1980s<sup>62</sup>. Despite the US declaration of a global 'war on terrorism' since September 11, 2001, a scenario that supports sustained, high-level naval combat that is global in scope is difficult to envisage and counter-terrorism will continue principally to be a war of intelligence and law enforcement, in which conventional military power is a supportive but subordinate element.

<sup>61</sup> Ken Booth, 'The New World Order' and the Future of Naval Power', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, November 1991, pp 17-27.

<sup>62</sup> See Zara Dian, 'Sea Lane Security', *Asian Defence Journal*, July 1985, p 3.

In terms of capabilities, the run-down of the former Soviet fleet has left a much-diminished Russian navy and China's emerging blue-water capability as the only remotely credible local challengers to US naval superiority, which continues to reap the benefits of multiplier technologies in command, control, communications and intelligence, and computerised battle management that are now at least one generation ahead of competitors'<sup>63</sup>. The end of the Cold War and the run-down of much of the former Soviet Navy restored US command of the sea in the open ocean to levels unmatched since 1945. Confirmation of this was seen in the doctrinal shift adopted by the US Navy to littoral operations, 'Forward from the Sea'. For the most part, the force structure built up by western navies for open-ocean ASW operations during the Cold War could be adapted to littoral roles with relative ease. One major exception concerns the limited ability both of the United States to operate its large, exclusively nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSN) -- designed to hunt Soviet submarines in the open ocean -- in shallow seas. Similarly, the bias built into US acoustic monitoring for detecting Soviet SSBNs and SSNs in open, deep-water areas led Eric Grove to predict, in 1993, that in the post-Cold War era ultra-quiet conventionally-powered attack submarines (SSK) "may become an important equaliser, the means by which smaller and poorer countries can defend themselves from richer and more powerful assailants"<sup>64</sup>, an assertion which the submarine procurement patterns of East Asian navies, including those of China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea as well as established SSK operators such as Japan, appear subsequently to have borne out<sup>65</sup>. The potential for commercial and/or military SLOC to be severely disrupted in the event of regional conflict in the Asia-Pacific, whether collaterally or as the result of a modern-day blockade or *guerre de course* is still widely assumed to be possible, in the expectation that "Strong regional powers will acquire submarine forces and develop doctrine to employ them against sea lines of communication"<sup>66</sup>.

The US military remains reliant on sea communications to project power reactively and to sustain its network of overseas bases. In major post-Cold War US strategic planning documents, while no threat to US sea control is foreseen in the Atlantic, the security of SLOC in the Middle East and Western Pacific has been retained among stated core US security interests. The East Asia Strategic Review released in 1995 highlighted the

<sup>63</sup> Paul Dibb, *Force Modernisation in Asia: Towards 2000 and Beyond*, SDSC Working Paper No. 306, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1997.

<sup>64</sup> Eric Grove, 'Navies in Future Conflicts', in Anthony Bergin and Hugh Smith (eds), *Naval Power in the Pacific: Toward the Year 2000*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder and London, 1993, pp 169-170.

<sup>65</sup> David Lague, 'We All Live for Another Submarine', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 15, 2002, pp 12-14.

<sup>66</sup> Michael Poirier, 'Sea Control and Regional Warfare', *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, July 1993, p 65.



security of sea lanes and a particular need to maintain the “ability to move forces through the sea lines to support contingencies in the Middle East”, reflecting East Asian economies’ growing dependence on oil from the Gulf. However, indicative of a shift in US post-Cold War perceptions, the security value of Southeast Asian chokepoint waterways such as the Malacca Strait has been evaluated as much in terms of their economic importance to regional and global trade as their significance as transit routes for military deployments between the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean. According to an unclassified 1993 National Defense University/Center for Naval Analyses study commissioned by the US Navy’s Deputy Chief of Naval Operations:

For many years, the prime concern was military, not economic, as the United States required secure maritime transport via SLOCs in case of war. Now the emphasis has shifted to the economic component of our national security, a policy reaffirmed when the United States announced (in March and May, 1995), that it would not accept disruption of trade in the South China Sea<sup>67</sup>.

However, reflecting the uncertainty which prevailed as to the trend of future US security priorities -- at least until September 11, 2001 -- the same study notes that as the “Cold War mind-set recedes, the naval mission of protecting shipping could emerge as an explicit national priority”<sup>68</sup>. The end of the Cold War provided impetus for the emergence of a truly global trading system within the framework of the World Trade Organisation and the 1990s saw an unprecedented expansion of global trade, much of it emanating from the developing economies of the Asia-Pacific, which had already doubled their share of world trade, from 10 per cent to 20 per cent in 1970-1990. Viewed from realist perspectives in international relations, the boost to global trade facilitated by the end of the Cold War has the potential to add to security tensions by increasing competition over finite energy resources and to amplify the vulnerability of key chokepoints to military pressure or terrorist attack. With overall Asian energy demand forecast to rise by around 71 per cent between 1999 and 2020 the risk of a strategic dynamic developing as part of increasing inter-state competition for access to hydrocarbons is seen by certain commentators as potentially focussing conflict on the energy import routes themselves<sup>69</sup>. In April 2002, reflecting increasing anxiety within Asia about oil supply interruptions in transit, a sea lane disruption simulation exercise

<sup>67</sup> John Noer with David Gregory, *Chokepoints: Maritime Economic Concerns in South-east Asia*, National Defense University Press/Center for Naval Analyses, 1996, Washington D.C., p 1.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. p 6.

<sup>69</sup> See Kent E. Calder, ‘Asia’s Empty Tank’, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 2, March/April, 1996; and Brian Cooper, ‘The coming conflict -- the battle of the SLOCs’, *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter*, January 2000, pp 9-12.



was launched by Asia Pacific Energy Research Centre (a part of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation), involving wide-ranging participants drawn from over 20 Asian states<sup>70</sup>. From countervailing neo-liberalist positions the growth of maritime trade is viewed as a force militating against inter-state maritime conflict by increasing the number of stakeholders in the security of the hard and soft infrastructure underpinning international trade and raising the economic costs of conflict<sup>71</sup>.

Since the end of the Cold War, the internationalisation of the maritime transport industry has also increased, to the point where a ship's registry, owner, insurer, crew and cargo are typically contracted among several nationalities. This process, which has occurred as a result of increased liberalisation and commercial pressures to drive down ship operators' costs, itself carries strategic consequences. Commentators view dwindling national fleets as undermining more than one country's security given doubts about the dependability of international shipping firms during crises and the inability of governments legally to compel them to sail<sup>72</sup>. Other analysts see the internationalisation of the shipping industry as complicating the option of blockade for potential aggressors by raising political costs to unacceptable levels. Daniel Coulter contends that defence planners have been slow to adjust from Mahanian security paradigms in response to a revolution in maritime transportation, in which ships, ports and other transportation nodes are increasingly networked<sup>73</sup>.

The strategic quality of a given waterway is a relative calculation of geopolitical and military factors, and all waterways are potentially strategic<sup>74</sup>. However, Coulter assumes that in the absence of credible threats to shipping in the open ocean, SLOC are synonymous with chokepoints, as the only places where ship traffic can systemically be hindered. Although the time-sensitive requirement of military planners to deploy forces in the quickest time possible via the most direct route is essentially unchanged since Mahan's day, the economics of navigational access through chokepoints operates under

<sup>70</sup> 'Energy Security and Sealane Disruption', Australian Energy News, Issue 24, June 2002; at [www.industry.gov.au/resources/netenergy/aen/aen24/6enrgy.html](http://www.industry.gov.au/resources/netenergy/aen/aen24/6enrgy.html) and interview with Gary Eng, Team Leader, Asia Pacific Energy Research Centre (APEREC), Tokyo, March 5, 2002.

<sup>71</sup> See Gary Klintworth, 'Asia-Pacific: More Security, Less Uncertainty, New Opportunities,' *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 5, no. 3, 1992, p 222; and Kusuma Snitwongse, 'Structural Changes in Asia-Pacific International Relations: Impact on South-East Asia', *Hitotsubashi Journal of Law and Politics, Special Issue*, 1994, pp 35-46.

<sup>72</sup> Michael Poirier, 'Sea Control and Regional Warfare', *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, July 1993, p 64; and Kawamura Sumihiko, in Bateman and Bates (eds) *Shipping and Regional Security*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 129, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1998, pp 18-20.

<sup>73</sup> Daniel Coulter, 'The Economics of SLOC protection; an Overvalued Mission', paper given at the Eleventh International Conference on the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC) Studies, Tokyo, November 17-18, 1997.



market-based rules which give the system considerable flexibility to cope with most localised obstructions. Whereas for reactive military deployments, timeliness is the most important criterion of success, the unit of efficiency for commercial cargoes is ton-miles.

Such obstructions can be diverted around without incurring prohibitive add-on costs as long as alternative routes are available and spare shipping capacity exists. As a result of over-investment by heavily subsidised ship-builders in Europe and Asia, large surpluses were built up during the 1990s across the global dry bulk and tanker fleets. Of the 252 million deadweight tons (DWT) of dry bulk-carrier capacity in service globally in 1995, there was a surplus of nearly 18 million DWT. While the surplus for bulk carriers has since declined to around 3 million DWT in 2001, for tankers the surplus rate remained above 6 per cent, or 18 million DWT in 2001, out of a global tanker fleet of 280 million tons. This suggests that ample slack exists within the system to cope with most foreseeable contingencies<sup>75</sup>. A similar situation currently exists in relation to container shipping, with around 3,500 container ships estimated to be in service globally, for a combined capacity of around 6 million 20-foot-equivalent units (TEUs), almost three times the level of 1990 (causing trans-Pacific container freight rates to fall by one-third since 1999)<sup>76</sup>. Given that shipping costs form a small (and diminishing) proportion of the overall import bill, the economic consequences of diverting to longer routes would be manageable for large economies, while the additional profit generated from extra ton/mile requirements would create a strong incentive for shipping firms to add capacity to service alternative routes<sup>77</sup>. As evidence of this, Coulter points to the closure of the Suez Canal, from 1967-75, as having only a marginal effect on global trade, despite the long diversion around the Cape of Good Hope. Only in the case of the Straits of Hormuz is the potential for the closure of a major chokepoint acknowledged by Coulter to have strategic potential, given its monopoly over access to oil terminals in the Gulf. However, the continued passage of tankers through the straits during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, in spite of ships being targeted by both sides and raised insurance premiums, is seen as evidence of the resilience of modern maritime transportation networks and the tanker's surprisingly robust ability 'to get through'. Indeed, while individual tankers are

<sup>74</sup> Michael McGwire, 'The Geopolitical Importance of Strategic Waterways in the Asian-Pacific Regional', *Orbis*, Vol. 19, No. 3, Fall 1975, p. 1061.

<sup>75</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, *Review of Maritime Transport, 2002*, United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2002, p 45. However, demand for double-hulled tankers currently exceeds supply, after the loss off northern Spain in November 2002 of the single-hulled *Prestige* led to the banning of single-hulled tankers from EU ports.

<sup>76</sup> Alkman Granitsas, 'In Evergreen's Wake', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 24, 2002, pp 50-52.

<sup>77</sup> See also Michael McGwire, 'The Geopolitical Importance of Strategic Waterways in the Asian-Pacific Regional', *Orbis*, Vol. 19, No. 3, Fall 1975, pp 1059-62.



vulnerable, there are weaker links in the oil supply chain: pipelines are fixed, exposed and non-substitutable, while the infrastructure of oil production, refining and storage presents more lucrative targets to potential adversaries. The loss of a single tanker would not necessarily halt supplies.

Coulter blames the residual influence of Mahan for the persistent confusion between military principles and market principles governing contemporary maritime transportation. As a result, he concludes that chokepoint SLOC are not essential to the free flow of seaborne commerce reflecting the fact that the “choice of route is a function of market conditions”. Similarly, according to McGwire’s 1975 assessment, “despite the volume of traffic passing through Malacca and the other straits of the Indonesian archipelago, these waterways are not essential for interoceanic trade”<sup>78</sup>.

However, Coulter has also argued that a new Achilles Heel has been created within the global trading system, limiting its ability to withstand shocks. This, he argues, is declining as the up-scaling trend in container shipping funnels world trade via a small number of hub ports concentrated in East Asia<sup>79</sup>. Combined with the relocation of industrial production to China and other low factor-cost destinations and the widespread adoption of just-in-time production techniques, this renders the maritime transportation system vulnerable to the disruption of operations at those few ports capable of handling vessels with a capacity of 5,000 TEU or above, for which no substitute port-handling capacity exists. The top five hub ports in the world are all located in East Asia, led by Hong Kong and Singapore (handling 18 million and 15.5 million TEU respectively in 2001), South Korea’s Pusan (8 million), Taiwan’s Kaohsiung (7.5 million) and Shanghai (6.3 million)<sup>80</sup>. Larger classes of container ship are in prospect with 8,000-TEU vessels and above considered technically and commercially viable.

The capacity of maritime trade, especially the flow of goods between East Asia and the United States, to survive the shocks of the 1995 Kobe earthquake, the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the US West Coast ports stoppage in October 2002 suggests that the system is perhaps more robust than feared. However, Asia’s ability to withstand disruption will only truly be tested in the event of a hub-port stoppage, a regional military crisis or a terrorist strike targeted at its ports infrastructure.

---

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. pp 1072-73.

<sup>79</sup> Daniel Coulter, ‘Hub Ports and Focal Points: New Entrants in the Maritime Security Lexicon’ in Griffiths, Thomas, Haydon (eds). *The Changing Strategic Importance of International Shipping*, Centre for foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1998, pp 135-145.

The greatest point of vulnerability in the maritime transportation system may in fact be the 'soft' infrastructure of marine insurance: it is uncertain to what extent shipping firms would be able or willing to operate if confronted by a sharp spike in premiums, or the extension of 'exclusion zones' withdrawing insurance cover in the Middle East or Southeast Asia should terrorist or war risk be judged unacceptably high<sup>81</sup>. Since the October 12, 2002 Bali bombing, war-risk status has applied to Indonesian ports, but not, as of February 2003, to passage through the archipelago.

#### 1. Sources of potential threat.

Some factors which have the potential to disrupt maritime transportation, such as maritime accidents, disasters at sea, or industrial disputes, while important to the flow of shipping are clearly not military SLOC security concerns. Potential challenges and threats to SLOC security which conceivably would merit the attention of post-Cold War defence planners fall into three categories:

i) maritime sovereignty claims that restrict navigational access to specific waters;

ii) terrorism-at-sea and piracy; and

iii) regional conflicts, which have the potential to disrupt proximate sea transportation routes, either as a result of the collateral effects of wars that spill out onto the maritime plain, or through deliberate obstruction by a sea denial power.

#### i) Maritime sovereignty claims.

At the end of the Second World War, the vast majority of the world's seas and oceans were regarded as 'high seas' areas in which all states enjoyed freedom of navigation rights, based on principles first outlined in the Dutch jurist Hugo Grotius' *Mare Liberum* in 1609. Currently, two-fifths of the world's seas and oceans are subject to some form of jurisdictional claim. The dramatic post-1945 shift in the legal status of seas and oceans arose out of a basic division between the desire of coastal states (mainly in the de-colonising world) to assert their sovereignty and enclose surrounding waters, against the concerns of Western maritime states to preserve freedom of navigation rights for

---

<sup>80</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, *Review of Maritime Transport*, 2002, United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2002, p 72.

<sup>81</sup> Philip Day, 'Asian Shipping Industry Is Hit By Higher Costs After Attacks', *Wall Street Journal*, September 26, 2001.



naval and commercial shipping and to maximise their access to marine resources in the water column and seabed.

Moreover, the end of the Cold War was also taken as a cue by some coastal states to steer the onus of maritime security away from great power military interests in power projection to the responsibility of littoral states for the management of coastal waters and straits. Malaysia's former maritime ambassador B.A. Hamzah, for example, described it as an opportunity for littoral states in the Straits of Malacca to escape their perceived historical role as "gate-keepers" to the great powers<sup>82</sup>.

UNCLOS was born in 1958 out of a need to mediate a compromise in international law between the interests of coastal and maritime states. The political difficulties and technical complexity involved in reaching an agreement acceptable to all participants led to a second and third convention in 1968 and 1982 (UNCLOS II and III respectively), and it was only in 1994 that the Convention finally entered into force. UNCLOS incorporated several new concepts into international law, many of which had already been codified within national statutes. These included an extension of territorial seas from 3 to 12 nautical miles, archipelagic status (ultimately granted to 14 nations, including Indonesia, the Philippines and the Solomon Islands) and 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zones (EEZ). Several categories of passage were negotiated to add to the prevailing regime of high-seas passage (see Appendix 2). It is estimated that UNCLOS brought 116 straits within the joint or sole jurisdiction of coastal states<sup>83</sup>.

Many newly independent coastal states harboured sensitivities over the prevailing regime of high-seas passage, which was resented as a legal cover for former colonial powers to preserve military access. Many de-colonising states, particularly archipelagic nations, such as Indonesia, were acutely sensitive to the risk of foreign intervention and infiltration. This was matched by a strong desire on the part of post-independence elites to assert sovereignty over geographically and ethnically fractured polities. Moreover, many coastal states lacked the capacity necessary to monitor their own coastlines. Tensions between the maritime and coastal states over legal attempts to enclose areas of

---

<sup>82</sup> B. A. Hamzah (ed), *The Straits of Malacca: International Co-operation in Trade, Funding and Navigational Safety*, Maritime Institute of Malaysia/Pelanduk Publications, 1997, Kuala Lumpur, p 126.

<sup>83</sup> Hasjim Djalal, *Indonesia and the Law of the Sea*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1995, p 84.



sea were especially acute in maritime Southeast Asia, where Indonesia sits at a “geopolitical crossroads”<sup>84</sup>.

UNCLOS has been viewed positively as reinforcing an order-based, institutionalised approach to establishing a common legal framework that both recognises the sovereignty claims of coastal states while upholding principles of freedom of navigation through international straits and offshore areas<sup>85</sup>. In the Asia-Pacific, no state has opposed the principles of freedom of navigation or innocent passage, while North Korea alone has not adopted the Convention<sup>86</sup>. Nor has any state in the region yet introduced tolls for the use of straits. Despite lingering sensitivities over the terms of passage for naval vessels under UNCLOS, particularly in respect to the terms of archipelagic sea lanes passage, both maritime and coastal states were able to reach agreement on freedom of navigation, probably reflecting shared interests in maintaining access to maritime commerce<sup>87</sup>.

Relative to the scale of daily flows of global and regional maritime traffic, restrictions introduced to date have had limited effect on the navigational freedoms of commercial vessels and aircraft, with the exceptions confined mainly to the transportation of nuclear cargoes and very large oil tankers. However, UNCLOS has failed to assuage the concerns of those who regard it as creating a framework for ‘creeping jurisdiction’ that could lead to new restrictions on passage or tolls being levied on heavily used waterways<sup>88</sup>. Most freedom of navigation concerns have concerned naval vessels and overflight rights. In July 1994, in the lead-up to UNCLOS’ passage into international law, the US Department of Defense conducted a study to calculate the extra time and fuel required for a carrier battle group deploying from Japan to Bahrain to detour around Australia, based on a scenario of being denied access to the Indonesian Archipelago and the Straits of Malacca<sup>89</sup>.

<sup>84</sup> Dino Patti Djalal, *The Geopolitics of Indonesia's Maritime Territorial Policy*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1996.

<sup>85</sup> See Hasjim Djalal: *Indonesia and the Law of the Sea*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1995.

<sup>86</sup> Ivan Shearer, ‘Current Law of the Sea Issues’, in *Maritime Change: Issues for Asia*, Sam Bateman and Ross Babbage (eds), Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 1993, p 58.

<sup>87</sup> The issue of marine resource ownership and deep-sea mining rights, contained in Article XI of UNCLOS, in fact proved to be a far more intractable issue to resolve during the third Convention, owing mainly to opposition from the United States, but for which UNCLOS might otherwise have been implemented several years earlier.

<sup>88</sup> See I.T. Laxton, ‘Creeping Jurisdiction in Southeast Asia: Its effect on Naval Mobility’, *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, May 1988, p 6; and Ivan Shearer, *Op. Cit.* p 62; and Linda Paul, in Sam Bateman (ed) *Maritime Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region: Current Situation and Prospects*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 132, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1999, p 126.

<sup>89</sup> It found that the diversion of 5,800 nautical miles would require an additional transit time of 15 days, assuming an average speed of 15 knots, and an extra fuel cost of \$2.9 million: UNLOS Dept. of Defence Position Summary '94: National Security and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, July 1994 at: [prosea.org/articles-news/unesco/UNLOS\\_Dept\\_of\\_Defense\\_Position\\_Summary\\_94.html](http://prosea.org/articles-news/unesco/UNLOS_Dept_of_Defense_Position_Summary_94.html)

ii) Terrorism-at-sea and piracy.

Among potential maritime security threats posed by non-state actors, terrorism-at-sea and piracy have received most attention since the end of the Cold War. This section deals first with terrorism-at-sea, before profiling modern piracy. Maritime terrorism is composed of the dual threats of attacks on ships and the threat of ships themselves being used to deliver concealed weapons of mass destruction (in containers or hidden within a ship's superstructure). Both have the potential to cause systemic economic dislocation, with the effect of a major attack on a US port or a transshipment hub such as Singapore being felt globally. The US Container Security Initiative adopted after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington requires designated port authorities to report to US customs the contents of containers destined for US ports 24 hours before a ship's departure. The US Antiterrorism Act 2002 (HR3983) also allows for entry into American ports to be refused for suspect vessels and for security assessments to be conducted in foreign ports. The governments of Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia are among those to have allowed US customs inspectors to be stationed at their ports<sup>90</sup>.

The risk of terrorist attacks at sea was demonstrated by the suicide 'ramming' attack against the USS *Cole* outside Aden harbour in Yemen, in October 2000, which killed 17 US sailors. Following the foiling of a suspected al-Qaida linked plot to bomb US naval vessels and personnel in Singapore in October 2001, a switch to 'soft targets' was suggested by the October 6, 2002 ramming of the French oil tanker *Limburg*, off Yemen, which in its execution closely resembled the attack on the *Cole*<sup>91</sup>. After the attack on the *Limburg*, the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) recommended that designated lanes used by tankers be declared 'no-go' areas for unauthorised craft, enforced by intensifying naval and police patrols<sup>92</sup>. In the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the Maritime Safety Committee of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) also announced plans in May 2002 to draw up a convention on countering terrorism-at-sea and to initiate new guidelines for ships and port infrastructure<sup>93</sup>. These were carried forward into the International Code for the Security of Ships and Port Facilities (including the mandatory fitting of all new vessels above 300 gross registered tons with satellite tracking and the designation of on-board security officers) and

<sup>90</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, *Review of Maritime Transport, 2002*, United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2002, pp 75-76.

<sup>91</sup> Traces of TNT and parts of a inflatable speed-boat were found within the *Limburg*'s hull.

<sup>92</sup> 'Make tanker lanes into no-go areas for other shipping says IMB', October 14, 2002, ICC/IMB Commercial Crime Services website: [www.iccwbo.org/home/news\\_archives/2002/stories/limburg.asp](http://www.iccwbo.org/home/news_archives/2002/stories/limburg.asp)



amendments to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), including the embossing of registration numbers on ships' hulls. Both initiatives were adopted by the IMO in December 2002 and will come into effect from July 1, 2004.

The IMB warned in its 2001 piracy report that terrorists might target shipping and the head of the IMO warned that extra vigilance would be required<sup>94</sup>. The Bali bombing underlined Indonesia's susceptibility to Islamic terrorism and a heightened risk that inter-regional shipping passing through chokepoints such as the Malacca, Sunda and Lombok straits could be targeted in subsequent strikes. While as of early 2003 there had been no repeat of the attack on the *Limburg* in Southeast Asian waters, among hypothetical post-September 11 scenarios to have been mooted is a terrorist attack on a liquefied natural gas (LNG) carrier or similar vessel while transiting the Malacca Straits, an act which it is claimed "would devastate Southeast Asia's economies and environment and severely disrupt trade as the straits could be closed to shipping for years"<sup>95</sup>. The newly formed US-based Maritime Intelligence Group has also claimed that members of Southeast Asian terrorist groups have been trained in suicide ramming techniques by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), in Sri Lanka. In addition they are also said to be developing other techniques for targeting shipping in Southeast Asia, including the use of sea mines and submersibles<sup>96</sup>.

More 'conventional' acts of terrorism-at-sea have also been carried out as part of the spill-over of separatist conflicts, the most organised being those carried out against government forces by the 'Sea Tigers', the LTTE's maritime wing, until a February 2002 cease-fire. In addition to past suicide attacks, LTTE actions at sea extended to robbery against international shipping in the busy sea lanes south of the island for revenue-generating purposes, while the guerrilla group has operated its own fleet of ships to smuggle in arms and supplies to the Jaffna Peninsula. Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM) separatist guerrillas, in Indonesia's Aceh province, have engaged in hostage-taking as a means to fund their operations, although a peace settlement in December 2002 has greatly reduced levels of violence. GAM is thought to be responsible for the hijack of a ship carrying coal in the Malacca Straits on August 25, 2001, the crew of

<sup>93</sup> 'Maritime states seek accord on terrorism at sea, *Financial Times*, May 29, 2002, p 10.

<sup>94</sup> International Maritime Bureau, *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships: Annual Report 2001*, ICC International Maritime Bureau, Barking, January 2002, p 22.

<sup>95</sup> John J Brandon, 'Protect Asia's Shipping', Pacific Forum CSIS, PacNet 21A, May 24, 2002.

<sup>96</sup> Jason Szep, 'Islamic militants trained for sea attacks', Reuters News Services, 21 January 2003.



which was subsequently held to ransom<sup>97</sup>. The Abu Sayyaf group in the southern Philippines has engaged in similar activities<sup>98</sup>.

In 1983, the issue of maritime piracy was raised at the IMO's general meeting, leading to the adoption of Resolution A545 which called for governments to adopt "measures to prevent acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships"<sup>99</sup>. The IMO subsequently requested that member states inform the Organisation of the details concerning any act of piracy or armed robbery against ships under their flag, including the reaction of coastal state authorities. The IMO also instructed its Maritime Safety Committee to draw up regular reports to record piracy incidents.

Modern maritime piracy (different definitions of which are explored below) occurs in coastal regions throughout much of the developing world, in South America, West and East Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and East Asia. In 1998, over 200 incidents were reported to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) worldwide, including at least 67 fatalities, 138 vessel boardings, eleven shooting incidents and 15 hijackings<sup>100</sup>. The problem has been most intractable in Southeast Asia.

Before 1989, piracy in the Malacca Straits was rare, at around about seven cases a year, but in that year the incidence of reported attacks increased to 28. In 1998, the IMB concluded that the incidence of piracy had reached "alarming" rates around Indonesia, the Straits of Malacca, Bangladesh, India and the Red Sea. The number of piracy incidents reported worldwide peaked at 469 in 2000, 119 of which occurred off Indonesia. Although the global incidence of piracy fell to 335 reported incidents in 2001, it rose again in 2002, to total of 370 incidents, while the number of hijacks also increased from 16 to 25. Indonesian waters were reconfirmed as the world's most dangerous, host to 103 incidents<sup>101</sup>.

<sup>97</sup> International Maritime Bureau, *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships: Annual Report 2001*, ICC International Maritime Bureau, Barking, January 2002. p 17, 20.

<sup>98</sup> 'Pirates seize Malaysian boats near Philippines', Reuters News Service, June 15, 2001.

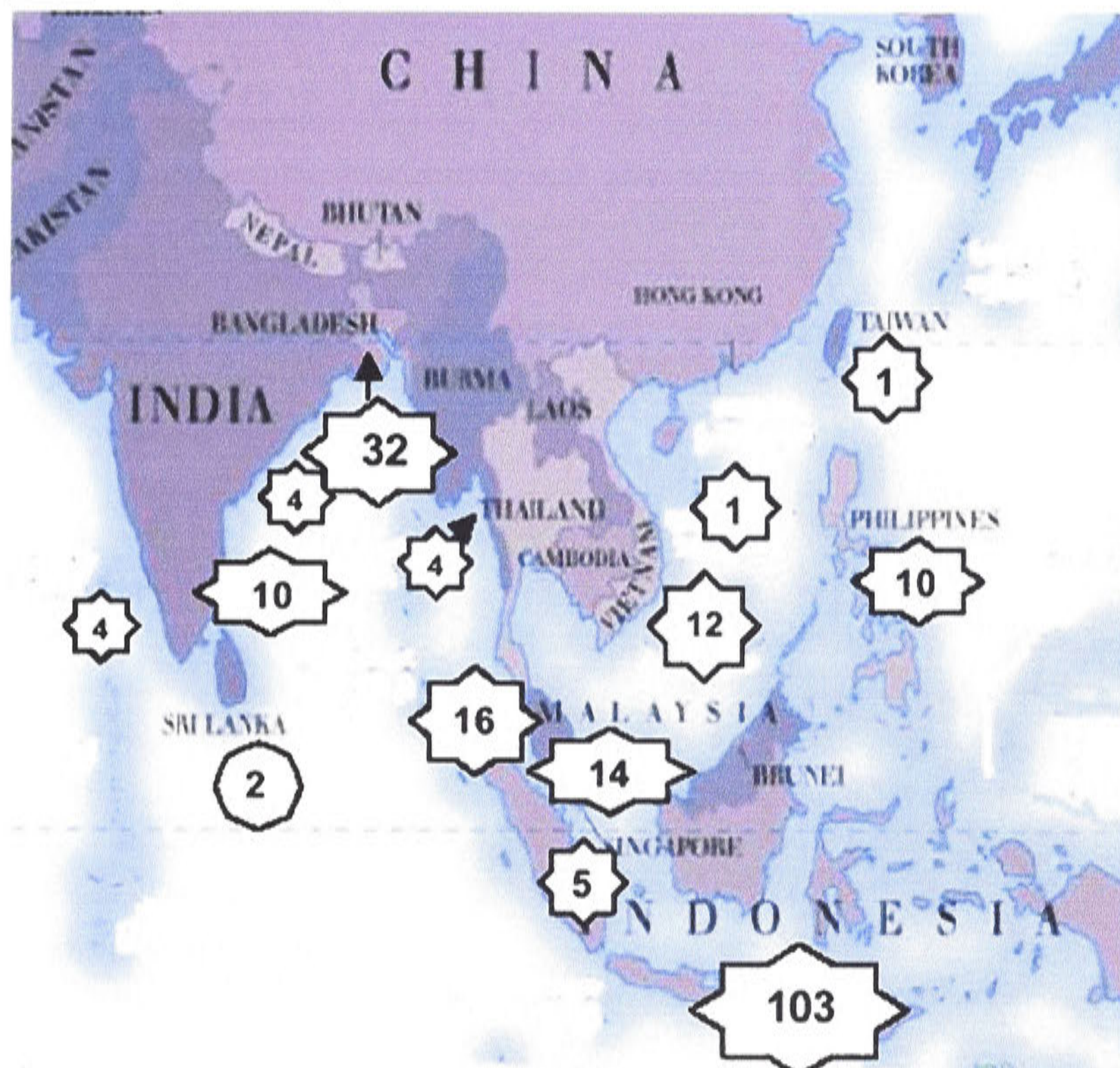
<sup>99</sup> Tanaka Norihide and Takase Hitoshi, in Hamzah and Ogawa (eds.), *Combating Piracy*, The Okazaki Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 2001, pp 166-67.

<sup>100</sup> 'Japanese Insurer Offers Piracy Cover' ICC/IMB Commercial Crime Services website, July 25, 1999: [www.iccwbo.org/ccs/news\\_archives/1999/japanese\\_insurer\\_offers\\_piracy\\_cover.asp](http://www.iccwbo.org/ccs/news_archives/1999/japanese_insurer_offers_piracy_cover.asp); and Jayant Abhyankar 'An Overview of Piracy Problems: A Global Update', Society of International Law, Singapore (SILS) Piracy Seminar, October 22, 1999, Orchard Hotel, Singapore: [www.sils.org/seminar/1999-piracy-02.htm](http://www.sils.org/seminar/1999-piracy-02.htm)

<sup>101</sup> 'High sea terrorism alert in piracy report', ICC/IMB Commercial Crime Services website, January 29, 2002: [www.iccwbo.org/home/news\\_archives/2003/stories/piracy%20report\\_2002.asp](http://www.iccwbo.org/home/news_archives/2003/stories/piracy%20report_2002.asp); and 'Seafarers Warned on Indonesia Pirates, Somali Armed Gangs', Dow Jones Newswires, October 23, 2002.



**Map 5:** Piracy incidents reported to the International Maritime Bureau in 2002



Source: International Chamber of Commerce:  
[www.iccwbo.org/ccs/imb\\_piracy/piracy\\_maps2002.asp](http://www.iccwbo.org/ccs/imb_piracy/piracy_maps2002.asp)

The IMO defines piracy according to article 101 of the 1982 UNLOS declaration as, “any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation’ directed at private ships or aircraft on (or above) the high sea”. Such incidents that take place within the territorial waters of a state are classified as “armed robbery at sea”. The definition of piracy has been contested in terms of which illegal activities should be admitted, ranging from terrorism-at-sea to petty theft committed while vessels are in port. Also debated has been whether to extend the definition to include criminal activities committed within territorial and archipelagic waters, in addition to high seas areas and air space. However, reflecting its institutional focus on preventing maritime crime, the IMB uses a more inclusive definition, incorporating any “act of boarding or attempting to board any



ship with the intent to commit theft or any other crime and with the intent or capability to use force in the furtherance of that act”<sup>102</sup>.

While this looser definition avoids the distortion of the IMO’s more legalistic approach, the IMB’s definition has been criticised by shipping associations as exaggerating the scale of the piracy problem<sup>103</sup>. By the same token, many incidents are believed to be under-reported by shipping companies that tend to weigh the slim probability of recovering stolen property and apprehending pirates unfavourably against the risk of raised insurance premiums and the prohibitive cost of charter delays incurred while port-side investigations can be conducted<sup>104</sup>.

Crimes against shipping grouped under the ‘piracy’ umbrella differ widely in both motivation and method. The IMB has identified a typology of modern piracy<sup>105</sup>. First, the practice of illegally boarding vessels under way, at night and from the rear, for the purpose of theft has been the most commonly witnessed form of piracy in Southeast Asia, formerly concentrated around the Philip Channel between Singapore and Indonesia. The average value of property and cash stolen during boardings has been put at between \$5,000-\$15,000, although this does not include the cost of damage, or the indirect and often much higher costs of delays and increased insurance<sup>106</sup>. Such attacks, generally characterised by low levels of violence, are concentrated in territorial waters rather than high seas. The declining size of ships’ crews is a factor contributing to the increased vulnerability of merchant ships to hit-and-run attacks, making it harder to maintain deck watches over large vessels<sup>107</sup>.

Second, robberies directed at easily removable property or valuables aboard ships at anchor are reported to be a common feature of piracy as practised in South American and West African waters. Until recently, these were seen as characterised by higher levels of violence than the under-way boardings in Southeast Asia. However, since its

<sup>102</sup> Jayant Abhyankar, in Hamzah and Ogawa (eds), *Combating Piracy*, The Okazaki Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 2001, p 11.

<sup>103</sup> See Samuel Pyeatt Menefee, ‘Crossing the Line?: Maritime Violence, Piracy, Definitions and International Law’, in Hamzah and Ogawa (eds), *Combating Piracy*, The Okazaki Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 2001, p 66.

<sup>104</sup> Even when apprehended, pirates may not face criminal proceedings. In the celebrated case of the *Petro Ranger*, a tanker intercepted by Indonesian pirates in the South China Sea and taken to the Chinese island of Hainan, Chinese authorities repatriated the crews’ abductors to Indonesia without trial.

<sup>105</sup> Jayant Abhyankar, ‘Piracy and Ship Robbery: A Growing Menace’, in Hamzah and Ogawa (eds), *Combating Piracy*, The Okazaki Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 2001, pp 10-59.

<sup>106</sup> Stanley Weeks, ‘Law and Order at Sea: Pacific Cooperation in Dealing with Piracy, Drugs and Illegal Migration’, in Sam Bateman and Stephen Bates (eds), *Calming the Waters: Initiatives for Asia Pacific Cooperation*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 114, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1996, pp 43-56.



1997-98 economic crisis, a wave of impromptu robberies on ships near Indonesia falls into this category.

Third, a category of 'military-style' piracy incorporates the illicit involvement of uniformed personnel in attacks on shipping for material gain and also overlaps terrorism-at-sea in cases where shipping is targeted by separatist guerrillas for the purpose of smuggling or fund-raising through extortion, theft and kidnapping. It has also been asserted that attacks on shipping with covert military involvement have been sanctioned for political as well as commercial reasons. In the East China Sea, the intimidation of shipping took on quasi-military overtones during a series of incidents in 1991-93 when firearms were used against merchant ships and fishing vessels, frequently without any attempt at boarding. As is seen in Chapter Eight, Japanese analysts believe that the harassment of Japanese and other shipping was tacitly sanctioned by Chinese officials for the purpose of reinforcing sovereignty claims.

Fourth, ship seizures have occurred whereby pirates take control of a vessel under way, beyond the range of coastal law enforcement, until appropriated cargo can be offloaded to another vessel alongside or at a friendly port. Such seizures imply a high level of organisation and potential violence, in the worst cases resulting in the killing or abandonment of the original crew at sea<sup>108</sup>. Several instances of this type of piracy have occurred in the East and Southeast Asia, including the *Petro Ranger*, the *Tenyu* and the *Alondra Rainbow*. The theft of vessels for use as 'phantom ships' in transnational cargo fraud is another growing trend: examples include the *M.V. Antoinette* and the *M.V. Isla* in the Philippines.

Piracy 'hotspots' identified at various times in the Asia-Pacific region over the last decade include the Yellow Sea, the waters north of Taiwan, the Hong Kong-Luzon-Hainan 'triangle' (which includes the northern portion of the South China Sea), the Surigao Strait south of Mindanao, and the Straits of Malacca and Sunda. Piracy is an inherently mobile problem, thus complicating law-enforcement efforts. In 1991-93, after anti-piracy patrols were introduced by Malaysia and Singapore in the Malacca Strait the reported incidence of piracy fell from 32 to 5 incidents, while incidents in the adjacent South China Sea climbed from 6 to 31 between 1992 and 1993, suggesting that

<sup>107</sup> Crew sizes of 30 or less on board large container ships and tankers are the norm.

<sup>108</sup> Jayant Abhyankar, 'Piracy and Ship Robbery: A Growing Menace', in Hamzah and Ogawa (eds). *Combating Piracy*, The Okazaki Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 2001, pp 10-59.



local success may merely have had a displacement effect<sup>109</sup>. Nonetheless, the IMB's Deputy Director has expressed the view that the scale of crimes at sea is small in relation to the incidence of onshore crime and that pirates' operations are most effectively disrupted by targeting their shore bases. While the total cost of maritime crime in 2000 has been estimated as high as \$US25 billion<sup>110</sup>, compared with the prospect of intentional military obstruction of SLOC or terrorism-at-sea intended to cause mass destruction or economic damage, modern piracy cannot be considered as a systemic threat to the security of international shipping lanes, much less to global trade. While not precluding the necessity for, and ability of, international law enforcement cooperation and joint coast guard patrols to counter the spreading phenomenon of maritime piracy, the number of incidents involving vessels under way remains a small proportion of the total. As a 'fact of life', some measure of lawlessness at sea might be thought of as an extension of various categories of organised and opportunistic crimes that are committed on land in developing countries, which create add-on costs for business but do not generally deter business operations themselves.

### iii) Regional conflicts.

Of the regional conflicts that have occurred since the end of the Cold War, for example in the Balkans, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, most have been civil wars involving little or no maritime element, except for the operations of the 'Sea Tigers' in Sri Lanka and GAM in Aceh. Although the 1991 Gulf War was a mainly air-land conflict, damage done to two US vessels from mines as well as the prospect of submarines being used to interdict Coalition SLOC in the Gulf caused concern for US military planners<sup>111</sup>. Despite this generally positive post-Cold War record, several flash-points with potentially serious maritime dimensions are located astride major shipping routes in the Asia-Pacific.

Among the most frequently cited is the South China Sea, where it is claimed that "even low-level, local conflicts could disrupt the SLOCs"<sup>112</sup>. The Spratly and Paracel islands, reported to lie atop major oil and gas deposits, are subject to competing territorial claims among several ASEAN members and wholly claimed by Vietnam, China and Taiwan

<sup>109</sup> Stanley Weeks, "Law and Order at Sea: Pacific Cooperation in Dealing with Piracy, Drugs and Illegal Migration", in Sam Bateman and Stephen Bates (eds), *Calming the Waters: Initiatives for Asia Pacific Cooperation*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 114, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1996, p 46.

<sup>110</sup> The estimate is by James Warren of the School of Asian Studies at Murdoch University; 'Asia piracy costs \$25 billion a year, says expert', Reuters News Service, December 10, 2002.

<sup>111</sup> Michael Poirier, 'Sea Control and Regional Warfare', *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, July 1993, p 64.

<sup>112</sup> Patrick M. Cronin and Yamaguchi Noboru, 'Japan's Future Regional Security Role', *Strategic Review*, summer 1992, pp 20-21.



(although the latter's claim is in practice limited to occupation of the largest island in the Paracels)<sup>113</sup>. On May 10, 1995 US Secretary of State Warren Christopher warned China, following the placing of Chinese territorial markers on Mischief Reef, which lies well within the Philippines' 200 nautical mile (EEZ), that Washington would view "with serious concern any restriction on maritime activity in the South China Sea that was not consistent with international law"<sup>114</sup>. According to a 1998 report by Congressman Dana Rorabacher<sup>115</sup>, China's naval activity around the Spratlys "threatens trade and military sea-lanes vital to the United States and our allies". Under normal conditions, a large volume of inter-regional merchant shipping (in the order of 36,000 ship transits per year) normally passes through the South China Sea<sup>116</sup>. Overlapping territorial disputes have not triggered a clash between regular naval forces since 1988 and only minor confrontations since. However, the South China Sea is still regarded as potentially volatile, in the context of 'resource nationalism', legal claims reinforced by the rigidities of domestic politics and armed forces modernisation programmes being undertaken by many claimants. The relatively undeveloped and reactive nature of the existing confidence building and crisis-resolution machinery in the region is also seen as hampering the effectiveness of regional diplomacy, despite ASEAN's efforts to persuade China to accept a Code of Conduct already brokered among its member states who are also disputants in the South China Sea.

Any large-scale resumption of fighting on the Korean Peninsula would almost certainly take the form of a predominantly air-land battle, with any naval element most likely limited to the enforcement of a sanctions blockade or clashes in the Yellow Sea, of the type that which involved the sinking of a South Korean frigate in June 2002 and a similar incident in 1999. However, there would also be a substantial risk of mines being used by the North, as in the 1950-53 Korean War. Most seriously, in the case of an armed conflict between China and Taiwan, unless limited to an exchange of missiles across the Taiwan Strait, the potential for a substantial maritime component ranges from the seizure of Taiwanese-held islands off the mainland, through various gradations of blockade, to the possibility of a full-blown invasion of the island. China's planning for a cross-straits conflict and the impact of this and potential maritime conflicts in the South China Sea on the SLOC security interests of the United States and Japan is explored in Chapters Seven and Eight. However, suffice it to say that compared with the North

<sup>113</sup> See for example Henry J Kenny, *An Analysis of Possible Threats to Shipping in Key South-east Asian Sea Lanes*, Center for Naval Analyses Occasional Paper, Alexandria, February 1996.

<sup>114</sup> Barbara Opall, 'U.S. Warns Claimants in South China Sea', *Defense News*, May 15-21, 1995, p 3.

<sup>115</sup> Quoted from 'US Congressman Raps Washington', *Asahi Evening News*, December 28, 1998, p 3.

Atlantic, where the perception of acutely threatened Western SLOC during the Cold War has since given way to a wholly benign naval security environment, in the Western Pacific, the view remains widely held that "it is simply too early to conclude that war has lost all its appeal"<sup>117</sup>.

### **Conclusion.**

This chapter traced the conceptual origin of SLOC in theories of sea power and observed how its definition as a narrowly conceived concept within naval strategy was remoulded and expanded by the currents of technological and geopolitical change in the twentieth century. I showed how the importance of controlling maritime communications for conducting trade and projecting power was stressed particularly by Sir Julian Corbett, who viewed it as the key to maritime strategy. However, the mono-dimensional definition of sea power on which Mahan and Corbett's assumptions were predicated was transformed by the development of the aircraft, the sea mine and -- above all -- the submarine, which during two world wars gave sea denial powers the revolutionary capability to mount a counter-blockade without having to directly challenge superior naval powers for sea control.

The total nature of these conflicts blurred the combatant/non-combatant distinction between navies, used to project power, and merchant fleets, whose role in transporting *materiel* and natural resources essential to sustaining industrial production became equally 'strategic'. Submarine-led offensives against shipping in the Atlantic and Pacific exposed the vulnerability of import-dependent maritime powers, raising the importance of 'commerce raiding' from an ancillary aspect of the war at sea to a potentially decisive factor. Conceptually, the advent of total war thus broke down the distinction between 'economic' and 'military' sea lines of communication.

The experience of the war at sea up to 1945, somewhat ambiguously underlined not only the vulnerability of maritime powers against the unique strategic potential of the submarine, but pointed also to the robustness of maritime transportation networks when properly defended. Convoy, though initially resisted by the Allies in the Second World War as it had been in the First, was critical to overcoming the German submarine threat in the Atlantic on both occasions. Conversely, all attempts during both conflicts to implement SLOC defence as an ASW operational concept were failures. Japan's

---

<sup>116</sup> John Noer with David Gregory, *Chokepoints: Maritime Economic Concerns in South-east Asia*, National Defense University Press/Center for Naval Analyses, 1996, Washington D.C., p 56.



negligence in protecting its shipping in the Pacific (the subject of Chapter Three) accelerated the virtual destruction of its merchant fleet and played a major role in hastening its defeat in 1945.

Despite doubts about whether a high-intensity naval conflict could realistically be sustained between nuclear powers given the dangers of nuclear escalation and the one-sided naval nature of most regional conflicts after 1945, the defence of SLOC remained integral to the planning of the United States and its maritime allies during the Cold War, especially in response to the growth of Soviet naval power from the mid-1960s onwards. However, concepts for SLOC defence underwent a transition in US naval strategy, as 'reactive' plans for the direct defence of high-value cargo were eclipsed by the Maritime Strategy's bold emphasis on 'offence as the best defence'.

The threat of a superpower 'blue water' conflict disappeared with the end of the Cold War. However, the Asia-Pacific region in particular is host to a number of unresolved territorial disputes which, particularly in the context of China's accelerating military modernisation programme, have the potential to lead to a high-intensity maritime conflict, across the Taiwan Strait and/or in the South China Sea. There is a widespread consensus that chokepoints remain the most vulnerable segments of SLOC and concerns that conflicts in East Asia could interrupt international shipping flows reflect the proximity of regional 'flash-points' to chokepoint straits where merchant shipping is normally concentrated. Such chokepoints normally encountered in transit could probably be bypassed, as seen in Chapter One, at less economic cost than is often widely assumed. However, the scope for diversion narrows as ships approach their terminals and the concentration of the container trade in particular around a small number of hub ports augments this aspect of SLOC vulnerability above others.

The end of the Cold War has witnessed an expanding definition of SLOC security -- as reflected in the broader maritime agenda of the ongoing Asia-Pacific SLOC conferences. This has brought to the fore new threats and challenges potentially impinging upon freedom of navigation for international shipping from piracy and terrorism-at-sea, as well as non-military issues of environmental security and shipping safety. A new maritime terrorist objective of mass destruction and economic dislocation has eclipsed piracy's more limited concern with financial gain as the most important non-state threat to shipping and seaborne trade.

---

<sup>117</sup> Aaron Friedberg, 'Ripe for Rivalry: Prospects for Peace in a Multipolar Asia', *International Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3, Winter 1993-94, pp 18-32.

While the world wars broke down the division between 'military' and 'economic' SLOC, such a distinction is still conceptually useful, especially as contemporary SLOC threats are likely to arise below the threshold of total war. Moreover, as Coulter suggests, the strategic requirements applying to the use of SLOC to project military power reactively differ significantly from the use of SLOC to conduct maritime trade. While the onus on speed for reactive naval deployments inherently limits flexibility in the choice of route, commercial shipping retains a much higher degree of flexibility to divert around localised obstructions in transit.

In the remainder of this thesis, these definitions and concepts are related to the specific circumstances of Japan's SLOC security, from 1940-2003.



## CHAPTER THREE

### Japan's pre-1945 SLOC Security

#### Introduction.

This chapter, which starts with Japan's opening up to the outside world and ends with its defeat in the Second World War, explores historical precedents for Japan's post-war Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) security concerns. The underlying contention is that while post-war strategic circumstances have changed, the geographical and economic context is still relevant. The catastrophe suffered by Japan's merchant marine between 1943-1945 also has continuing psychological resonance in modern Japan and upon popular and elite perceptions of vulnerability. Lastly, while the Maritime Self Defense Forces (MSDF) are structured and oriented very differently to the Imperial Navy, elements of continuity between the two institutions are revealed in the history of the pre-1945 era, with a bearing on the priority placed upon post-war SLOC security by senior MSDF officers, many of whom formerly served in the Imperial Navy. The chapter is divided into four sections; 1) Maritime economic interests, outlining Japan's foreign trade, merchant marine and economic dependency on sea-borne commerce; 2) Maritime strategic interests, dealing with relevant aspects of the development of the Imperial Navy, 1868-1945; 3) The War of the *Maru*; an account of the Allied anti-shipping campaign in the Pacific War; and 4) The inadequate protection of merchant shipping, which details Japan's defence of maritime transportation and reasons for its shortcomings.

In the century between Commodore Perry's act of gunboat diplomacy in Uruga Bay in 1853, which began Japan's opening up to the world, and 1953, its first full year of independence after the Allied Occupation, few nations have compressed more into their history. At the initial point of departure Japan was still in a state of self-imposed quarantine in place since the 17th century. Trade was minimal, delegated to Dutch merchants operating through Nagasaki, and the possession of large sailing craft was prohibited by an ordinance dating back to 1635. At the midpoint, 1903, Japan had prevailed in its first modern test of arms against China; was an ally of Great Britain, the pre-eminent sea power of the day; and was poised to inflict a historic victory over Russia, the world's third-largest naval power and Japan's immediate expansionist rival in Northeast Asia. Japan's metamorphosis from

international recluse to great power in just 50 years also marked the high-point in its pre-1945 maritime history. In 1945, the Imperial Navy was already fading into memory, the broken hulks of its battle fleet strewn from Midway Island to the Philippine Sea and its surviving units were disestablished in October of that year. By 1953, the nation's post-war leaders were in the process of establishing a new navy, this time under American auspices.

One of the major consequences of two centuries of closure to the outside world was Japan's failure to develop strong maritime traditions, in spite of its geography. Lacking meaningful overseas trading links or sailing ships bigger than inshore fishing and cargo vessels, Japan had to import and model the skills of a seafaring nation when compelled to end its international isolation. In overcoming the emotional and technological inertia of two centuries of insularity the generation that lived through the Meiji Era (1868-1912) demonstrated a remarkable capacity to absorb and adapt alien systems of thought and action. Japan's transformation from quasi-feudal to proto-modern in 30 years is perhaps unrivalled. Rushing to put in place a modern system of government across fields as disparate as finance, defence and education, the Meiji statesmen were attempting not only to catch up with western organisational concepts and technology from a low base, but did so at a time when Western civil and military science was itself advancing at revolutionary pace.

The scale of Japan's post-war economic dependence on sea transportation was outlined in Chapter One. Japan's prewar maritime interests can be divided into the economic, arising from industrialisation, and the strategic, as power began to be projected beyond the shores of the new unitary state. Militarily, from 1894-1945, the Imperial Army was continuously engaged on the Northeast Asian mainland and it fell to the Imperial Navy to provide transportation and sea control as prerequisites to the army's continental presence. Economically, sea transportation was indispensable to developing Japan's industrial base. For the civilian economy, exports were the only means to generate the foreign exchange needed to finance imported technology and raw materials (including metallic ores, rubber, high-grade coal and later, oil). Mechanisation spread this dependence to the military until modern warfare was no longer possible without a strong industrial base and a secure fuel supply. However, in none of the wars fought prior to 1941 was Japan's vulnerability to



commerce warfare sufficiently exposed to prepare it for the disaster suffered by the merchant marine in the Pacific War and the part this played in the country's defeat.

### **I. Maritime economic interests: Foreign trade and the merchant marine before 1945.**

Once launched on the path to industrialisation, the Meiji founders' immediate concern was to import the skills and equipment necessary to lay the economic foundations of a modern state. Although this initial need ameliorated with the success of import substitution policies, industrialisation and population growth made it necessary to import increasing quantities of raw materials and food. With this general 'problem' in mind, Japan's pre-1945 foreign trade and industry can be divided into two periods; 1859-1914 and 1914-1945.

#### **i) 1859-1914.**

The first phase, from the full opening of Japan's ports in 1859 to around 1880, was mainly concerned with setting up Japanese commerce to compete with western firms trading in Japan. Government investment was also directed into infrastructure and key industries such as shipbuilding and munitions. Most of Japan's trade stayed in foreign hands during the first half of Emperor Meiji's reign. Primary and semi-manufactured goods, such as tea and silk, were exported for foreign exchange to pay for the purchase of foreign plant and know-how. The trend towards increased Japanese ownership was pioneered by the family-run *zaibatsu* conglomerates; Mitsui, established in 1876; Mitsubishi; Sumitomo and Yasuda<sup>1</sup>. Under Meiji, the bottom-up mercantile culture slowly built up under the Tokugawa Shogunate met with the top-down, planned capitalism of Meiji bureaucrats, forging the links between commerce and political administration which have since characterised the Japanese developmental model. In the second phase, from 1880 to the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95, textiles, as Japan's first major commercial manufacturing sector, began to move out of people's homes into small factories. Latecomers on the international scene, Japanese manufacturers found themselves at a disadvantage in competition for overseas markets with western firms able to produce superior-quality products while enjoying the protection of empires and spheres of influence. Once China was commercially opened to Japan as a participant in the treaty port system in 1895, this suited investment in textiles and light manufacturing, but heavy industry required greater protection. By the turn of the century, the Meiji government's efforts to build up indigenous commerce and industry had

successfully reduced the need for foreign machinery, chiefly from Great Britain, although Japan's reliance for certain kinds of manufactured goods continued up to the First World War<sup>2</sup>. Exports, still dominated by silk, also began to include a rising proportion of manufactured goods<sup>3</sup>. In the third phase, which lasted up to the First World War, heavy industry began to emerge properly in Japan<sup>4</sup>. Textiles still accounted for half of exports, chiefly to the United States, Korea and China (which doubled as a supplier of raw cotton and consumer of the finished product). Investment in urban power electrification also surged during this time<sup>5</sup>.

However, during the Meiji period, "scarcely any change took place without indirect, if not direct, connections with wars or preparations for war"<sup>6</sup>. Commerce and conquest became intertwined in several ways. First and foremost, to the Meiji oligarchy the creation of national prosperity was considered as one half of the national security equation. Military strength and wealth were equated as sources of national power and prestige, encapsulated in the slogan *fukoku kyōhei* ('rich country: strong army'). Industrialisation was actively promoted as part of the Meiji oligarchs' drive to acquire modern armaments. Armaments production received a major boost after the Triple Intervention of 1895, when Russia, in concert with France and Germany, compelled Japan to rescind the Liaotung Peninsula, newly wrested from China. Determined to avoid a recurrence, Meiji officials added six regular divisions to the army and began constructing a new battle fleet with the aim of making Japan as self-sufficient in military production as possible. Spending on the Navy leapt four-fold, to over 50 million yen, between 1895 and 1898<sup>7</sup>. Second, financing an arms build-up on this scale, much of it purchased overseas, was only possible with a healthy commercial sector to provide a taxation base. Third, obtaining captive markets by force in China and Korea shielded Japan's fledgling industries from western competition and allowed them to prosper. Fourth, territories brought under Japanese control promised to provide a steady stream of raw materials, and labour, needed for industrialisation. Among

<sup>1</sup> Sydney Giffard, *Japan Among the Powers, 1890-1990*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1994, p 42.

<sup>2</sup> Nakamura Takafusa, *Lectures on Modern Japanese Economic History 1926-1994*, LTCB International Library Foundation, 1994, p 17.

<sup>3</sup> W.G. Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan*, Charles E. Tuttle Company, Tokyo, 1990, pp 111-14.

<sup>4</sup> These three phases have been adapted from W.G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism 1894-1945*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987, p 37.

<sup>5</sup> Nazli Choucri, Robert C. North, Yamakage Susumu. *The Challenge of Japan Before World War II and After: A Study of National Growth and Expansion*, Routledge, London, 1992, p 30.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p 40.



these raw materials only coal was relatively plentiful in Japan, and this was of low-grade quality requiring the importation of higher grades for coking<sup>8</sup>. As more of Northeast Asia came under the Japanese yoke, Korea, Manchuria and China became important sources of coal, iron ore and pig-iron to the home economy. Manchuria began receiving Japanese investment in 1906 and, as the army-run colony of Manchukuo from 1932, would eventually provide 20 per cent of Japan's pig-iron and 8 per cent of its steel<sup>9</sup>. Lastly, an indirect consequence of industrialisation was the doubling of Japan's population to 50 million during the Meiji era. Self-sufficiency in food production dropped to 80 per cent and to compensate, Taiwan, ceded by China in 1895, and Korea, annexed in 1910, became important suppliers of rice<sup>10</sup>.

## ii) 1914-1945.

The First World War provided a timely fillip, bringing the Japanese economy out of recession in 1915. Japan was able to break into trading concessions formerly monopolised by the European powers, while catering to the huge transportation and shipbuilding needs of the Allies. Though the war was not of great military significance for Japan, the expansion of its trading and shipping interests and the new significance which oil gained during the conflict nudged Japan over a strategic threshold. The functioning of the economy and its military arms would in future be hostage to the security of seaborne transportation and overseas resources.

Since the 1900s, exports had expanded from an annual average of 85 million yen between 1890-94, to 1,800 million yen between 1920-24<sup>11</sup>. Yet because imports outstripped exports in most years except for the wartime boom of 1915-1918, Japan actually carried a balance of payments deficit into the 1930s<sup>12</sup>. The end of the war also left Japan with an overcapacity in shipbuilding and other industries. Recession returned in 1920 and was followed by the devastating earthquake in Tokyo and Yokohama of 1923 which required massive reconstruction. These negatives aside, Japan's economy had by the 1920s attained a mature,

---

<sup>7</sup> Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan*, Charles E. Tuttle Company, Tokyo, 1990, p 148.

<sup>8</sup> Choucri et al., *The Challenge of Japan Before World War II and After: A Study of National Growth and Expansion*, Routledge, London, 1992, p 29.

<sup>9</sup> Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan*, Charles E. Tuttle Company, Tokyo, 1990, p 198.

<sup>10</sup> Choucri et al., *The Challenge of Japan Before World War II and After: A Study of National Growth and Expansion*, Routledge, London, 1992, p 28.

<sup>11</sup> Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan*, Charles E. Tuttle Company, Tokyo, 1990, pp 112-13.

generally balanced structure in which the *zaibatsu* held a dominant position. By mid-decade, annual foreign trade was approaching 5 billion yen, or around one-tenth of national wealth<sup>13</sup>. Despite the onset of global depression, by 1930 heavy industry and chemicals had overtaken textiles as the most productive sector of the economy, accounting for nearly one-third of output<sup>14</sup>.

After Japan experienced a severe recession known as the *Shōwa* Slump, from the title of Emperor Hirohito's reign (1926-1989), the devaluation of the yen in 1932 provided incentive to import cheaper raw materials from East Asia. Exports to the region, where there were relatively few barriers to Japanese products, flourished at the same time. During 1934-36, China, Korea and Taiwan between them absorbed 60 per cent of Japan's exports and accounted for half its imports<sup>15</sup>. Encouraged by generous government subsidies directed toward rearmament, heavy industry pulled Japan out of recession until it accounted for almost 60 per cent of output by 1940<sup>16</sup>. The transition to a wartime economy followed Japan's withdrawal from the Washington and London naval treaties in 1936, and the outbreak of general hostilities in China in July 1937. Increasingly militaristic governments funnelled state resources into war preparations, raising military spending from 9 per cent of GNP between 1933-37 to 38 per cent of GNP in 1938-42<sup>17</sup>.

As political ties with the United States soured over Japan's China policy, the reliability of Japan's primary supplier of oil and a host of other mineral resources presented the military and civilian leadership with an acute dilemma. In none of the territories under Japan's control was there an adequate supply of rubber, or many non-ferrous metals or oil -- commodities all critical to a sustained war effort. Japan therefore had to purchase most of these strategic resources on the open market. The combined total of bulk commodity

---

<sup>12</sup> Choucri et al., *The Challenge of Japan Before World War II and After: A Study of National Growth and Expansion*, Routledge, London, 1992, p 37-38.

<sup>13</sup> Sato Ichiro, *The Naval Policy of Japan, Brassey's Naval and Shipping Annual 1927*, William Cowes and Sons, London pp 71-80.

<sup>14</sup> Nakamura Takafusa, *Lectures on Modern Japanese Economic History 1926-1994*, LTCB International Library Foundation, 1994, p 6, p 16-17.

<sup>15</sup> Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan*, Charles E. Tuttle Company, Tokyo, 1990, p 188.

<sup>16</sup> Sydney Giffard, *Japan Among the Powers, 1890-1990*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1994, p 115-16.

<sup>17</sup> Beasley, *The Rise of Modern Japan*, Charles E. Tuttle Company, Tokyo, 1990, p 189.



imports in 1941 amounted to about 20 million tons<sup>18</sup>. As access to US resources became politically uncertain, military and business circles began contemplating Southeast Asia as an alternative source of strategic materials. Until the war in Europe changed the balance of power, Japan was reluctant to risk confrontation with the United States and Great Britain by pressuring for a greater commercial allocation of Southeast Asian resources. In October 1939, with the European colonial powers preoccupied with the struggle against Hitler, the Cabinet Planning Board concluded that Japan should "bring within our economic sphere areas on the East Asian mainland and in the southern region"<sup>19</sup>. The ideal of economic autarky for Japan found expression in the Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere. Overseen by a special ministry created in November 1942, the Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere was partly political in nature, responding to a long-running Japanese foreign policy ambition to exclude European colonialism from Asia. The economic motivation was to incorporate Japan's military conquests into a yen-denominated bloc capable of furnishing its material needs in wartime and beyond.

### iii) Merchant fleet.

The creation of a merchant fleet, as a necessary adjunct for an aspiring trading nation, was assigned high priority in Meiji development strategy. Modern cargo vessels were essential for coastal as well as foreign trade. Japan constructed its first steamer in 1866, but imported about 90 per cent of its merchant ships up to the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. Shortcomings in Japanese designs exposed in the war motivated the Meiji government to invest and intervene heavily in shipbuilding to improve its naval and merchant fleets, the latter doubling in size to 1.5 million tons within a decade. Shipbuilding was further invigorated by the Russo-Japanese War, and while still on a modest scale compared to other industrial powers, by 1913, half of Japan's trade was being carried in Japanese bottoms<sup>20</sup>. Owing to the stimulus to shipbuilding provided by the First World War, Japan possessed the world's third largest merchant navy by 1917 and was unable to keep pace with new

---

<sup>18</sup> The importance of other bulk commodities to Japan's war economy is frequently overshadowed by Japan's dependence on oil. Iron ore requirements, for instance, expanded from less than 500,000 tons in 1940 to 1,718,000 tons in 1943<sup>18</sup>, almost all of which had to be brought in by sea.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p 201.

<sup>20</sup> Sydney Giffard, *Japan Among the Powers, 1890-1990*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1994, p 42.

orders its shipyards were receiving<sup>21</sup>. A post-war glut in shipping worldwide hit Japanese shipbuilders hard, but the industry eventually recovered in the 1930s with the aid of renewed subsidies and the introduction of a scrap-and-build scheme by the government designed to encourage the modernisation of the fleet<sup>22</sup>. In 1935, the merchant fleet consisted of 924 cargo ships, 319 semi-cargo ships, 73 passenger ships and 39 tankers<sup>23</sup>. By 1941, Japan's merchant marine was eclipsed only by Great Britain and the United States<sup>24</sup>. Yet this belied Japan's continuing dependence on foreign bottoms to carry 40 per cent of its trade, most of which were certain to withdraw their services in wartime<sup>25</sup>. Furthermore, the projected shortfall was sure to be worsened by requisitioning on the part of the Imperial armed forces.

Requisitioning in fact began in the 1930s, dividing the merchant fleet under separate Army, Navy and civilian direction. The General Staffs of both services oversaw shipping under their control, while the Shipping Control Board was created within the Ministry of Communications to manage civilian vessels. No central coordinating authority existed. The Navy increased its demands for merchantmen until 1,740,200 tons, approaching one third of the total, had been commandeered by the time of Pearl Harbor<sup>26</sup>. Some of this included 'shadow' warships classed as ocean liners to circumvent the limitations treaties<sup>27</sup>, but requisitioning of civilian ships and crews on such a scale would nevertheless leave the merchant marine genuinely under-equipped to meet the nation's economic transportation needs in wartime. Army requisitioning was even more draconian, bringing over 2 million tons of merchant shipping under its control by Pearl Harbor. Though some was returned to civilian control, the extended campaigns in the Solomons and Burma retarded the process

<sup>21</sup> Mark P. Parillo. *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, pp 50-52.

<sup>22</sup> Nakamura Takafusa, *Lectures on Modern Japanese Economic History 1926-1994*, LTCB International Library Foundation, 1994, p 71.

<sup>23</sup> James E. Auer. *The Postwar Rearmament of Japanese Maritime Forces, 1945-71*, Praeger, New York 1973, p 14.

<sup>24</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, pp 395-98.

<sup>25</sup> D.W. Waters, 'Japan - Defeat through Blockade - 1941-45', *The Naval Review*, Vol. 76, No. 3, July 1988, pp 246-47.

<sup>26</sup> Mark P. Parillo. *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 75.

<sup>27</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 319, 361.



and the army remained so short of transports during the war that even the 'super-battleship' *Yamato* was used as a troop ferry<sup>28</sup>.

Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Cabinet Planning Board determined that 3 million tons of merchant shipping would be required to keep Japan's economy afloat. Added to this, the army's transportation needs were estimated to be 2.3 million tons during the first six months of operations, declining to 1.1 million tons per year thereafter. The Navy's shipping requirements were predicted to remain steady at 1.8 million tons annually<sup>29</sup>. By the outbreak of war the combined merchant fleet had reached 6.4 million tons, and with further construction, the prospect of captured vessels and a flotilla of wooden craft to draw upon, these demands appeared within its reach on paper at least. Provided that merchant shipping losses could be kept to under 1 million tons per year and ample resources for steel production secured, the director of the Planning Board judged that new construction would enable Japan to maintain the flow of materials to Japan at 1941 levels<sup>30</sup>. Other government studies warned that if civilian shipping was reduced to 1.5 million tons, steel production would decline by one-fifth and more than half the output of the secondary sector, composed of bulk commodities such as coal, salt, fertiliser, soy, bricks and cotton, would be lost. The 3 million-ton figure calculated by the Cabinet Planning Board as necessary for economic survival, was in fact over-assessed, described in one view as "a positive assessment intended to bring war about"<sup>31</sup>. Prewar estimates in general demonstrated insufficient understanding of the stresses that wartime conditions would impose on the sea transportation system. Compounding the dangers and logistical difficulties faced during the Pacific War, Japan's civilian and military transportation were approached as discrete problems. Partly, this was for bureaucratic reasons, but except for a relatively few cases, the front lines were too far removed from natural resources to combine economic and military supply missions efficiently. Military supply ships generally returned to Japan carrying

<sup>28</sup> Mark P. Parillo. *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 15, 239; Table A.5. Control of Japanese Merchant Marine Tonnage during World War II.

The Imperial Army also designed, built and operated its own fleet of transport submarines throughout the war to resupply outlying garrisons.

<sup>29</sup> Mark P. Parillo. *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, pp 34-38.

<sup>30</sup> Nakamura Takafusa, *Lectures on Modern Japanese Economic History 1926-1994*, LTCB International Library Foundation, 1994, p 109-10.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. p 110.

ballast, leaving civilian ships to bear the unsupported burden of supplying the home economy<sup>32</sup>.

## II. Maritime strategic interests: The Imperial Navy, 1868-1945.

Before turning to the war against Japanese shipping in the Pacific and the responses of the Imperial Navy and Japanese government, it is worth focussing on the institution of the Navy and relevant aspects of its 77-year history in three phases; Phase I: birth to maturity, 1868-1905; Phase II: uncertainty, austerity and expansionism, 1906-36; Phase III: oil -- life-blood for the Navy, 1937-45. This is not a battle history, but intended to highlight the most important influences on the traditions, outlook, threat perceptions and doctrine of the Imperial Navy, including such particular factors as the Navy's role in politics and its dependence on imported oil.

### Phase I: Birth to maturity, 1868-1905.

The Imperial Navy formally came into existence with the Meiji Restoration in 1868, from a composite force of foreign vessels assembled by the Satsuma clan since the 1850s<sup>33</sup>. The enduring schism between Army and Navy under Meiji owed something to the legacy of clan rivalry between the Satsuma and Choshu households who fought a civil war early in the Meiji era. While Satsuma exerted a lasting influence over the Imperial Navy, Choshu maintained a close association with the new national army<sup>34</sup>. Early development was concerned with building up the fleet and overcoming the shortage of indigenous knowledge by importing modern naval technology, tactics and strategy from the West. This meant reliance on imported vessels, mostly from Great Britain, which as the world's leading naval power established a paternal relationship with the world's newest<sup>35</sup>. The Imperial Navy was ideally placed as an institution to fulfil the Meiji ethos, acting as a conduit for foreign learning and technology, strengthening Japan's defences and enhancing national prestige.

<sup>32</sup> D.W. Waters, 'Japan - Defeat through Blockade - 1941-45', *The Naval Review*, Vol. 76, No. 3, July 1988, p 247.

<sup>33</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 5.

<sup>34</sup> When Satsuma's coastal artillery at Kagoshima dueled with a British naval squadron in August 1863, Togo Heihachiro, the victor at Tsushima in May 1905, was present as a gunner. (Edwin P. Hoyt, *Three Military Leaders: Togo, Yamamoto, Yamashita*, Kodansha International, Tokyo, 1993, pp 21-24).

<sup>35</sup> Ian Nish (ed), *Anglo-Japanese Naval Relations: Papers by Kiyoshi Ikeda, Ian Gow, John Chapman, Chit-chung Ong*, International Studies 1985/3, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, 1985.



Proof of the latter came with the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1902, Japan's symbolic accession to the great power club. The alliance, too, was largely naval in character, the product of Great Britain's desire to preserve a favourable balance with Russia. However, the British government was careful to negotiate its terms so that military assistance only applied in cases of attack by more than one country. Though not party to Japan's pre-1914 wars, Great Britain supplied it with naval vessels used to win naval victories over China and Russia, delivering its last battleship, *Kongō*, to the Yokusuka shipyards in November 1913<sup>36</sup>. The horizons of Japan's early naval leaders were necessarily confined and their energies consumed by the challenges of building up a modern navy. This in fact aided the development of a coherent naval strategy limited to exercising local sea control. Only once the Imperial Navy escaped the territorial and technical limitations of its inaugural phase, in 1905, did it set out on the path to strategic over-extension.

Early Imperial Navy officers tended to imbibe the tenets of western naval thinking uncritically, accepting the 'navalist' orthodoxy of Alfred Thayer Mahan that national greatness lay in domination of the seas, and that the means resided in potent battle fleets. Though Mahan wrote for an Anglo-American audience, his works fed through into a preference for offensive naval doctrine in Japan<sup>37</sup>. In later years, after Japan emerged as the naval hegemon in the Western Pacific, Mahan's views helped to shape a deterministic strand of thinking in both Japan and the United States that a naval clash to decide mastery of the Pacific was inevitable. In 1894, Japan entered into its first modern war against China with a mixed fleet of 28 warships totalling 57,000 tons and a force of 24 torpedo boats, incorporating Japanese-designed quick-firing guns and torpedoes. On the strength of prestige accruing from its victory over the Chinese Fleet at the Yalu River, and its role in facilitating landing operations in Liaotung and Korea, the Navy successfully boosted its status and budgetary share to a level comparable with the army. With memories of the 1895 Triple Intervention still fresh, Yamamoto Gombei, then chief of the Naval Affairs Bureau of the Navy Ministry, pushed for the construction of a battle fleet to be built up over ten years comprising six battleships, six armoured cruisers and 23 destroyers amounting to 234,000

<sup>36</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, pp 163-64.

<sup>37</sup> Although the United States Naval Academy closed its doors to Japanese students in the 1890s, this did not prevent Mahan from exerting a powerful influence on young officers such as Akiyama Saneyuki (see below), who made an unsuccessful bid to lure Mahan to teach strategy in Japan. (Ibid. p 71).

tons. When complete, the 'six-six' fleet was a quantitative and qualitative leap that elevated Japan into the top flight of naval powers. Yamamoto's rationale for the core of the new fleet - six battleships - was based on his (1896) estimate of the largest opposing naval force that Japan was likely to face, which he surmised to be a '4+2' squadron assembled by one major and a lesser naval power in coalition<sup>38</sup>. As long as the Russians were equally determined to reinforce their Pacific Squadron, based in Port Arthur and Vladivostok, the Imperial Navy would lack control of the Japan and Yellow seas, an essential requirement if it was to challenge Russian expansion in Manchuria and Korea.

By 1903, Japan was openly gearing for war with Russia and hurried additions to the fleet took the Imperial Navy into hostilities the following February with a total of six battleships, eight armoured and 16 other cruisers, 20 destroyers and 58 torpedo boats. As in 1894-95, the scope of Imperial Navy operations against Russia was local, involving pre-emptive, small-unit attacks on the enemy's fleet ports, the support of landing operations and a major fleet encounter. Although conducted offensively, the strategic role of the Imperial Navy -- to support army operations on land -- was defensive, a point realised at the time by Sir Julian Corbett<sup>39</sup>. At Tsushima, in May 1905, Admiral Togo Heihachiro scored the most famous annihilating victory in modern naval history against the Czar's Baltic Fleet (renamed the Second Pacific Squadron) at the end of its seven-month voyage from Europe. The totality of Togo's victory, presaging Russia's defeat on land, heralded a major shift in the balance of power in East Asia, confirmed the Imperial Navy's strategic, tactical and technological prowess and dealt a shock to those unprepared for the first defeat of a European power by a non-European race. In its wake, Japanese naval theorists such as Akiyama Saneyuki and Satō Tetsutarō found the confidence to ponder a naval strategy tailored to meet Japan's requirements, but which would extend the horizons of the Imperial Navy beyond local defence.

The Imperial Navy's success at Tsushima blinded its leadership to less glamorous aspects of the war that could have yielded important lessons including the failure to develop any

---

<sup>38</sup> This resembled capability-led planning on the model of Great Britain's two-power standard, which had dictated the Royal Navy's force structure since 1889. (Ibid. pp 57-60).



strategy for commerce protection. Having requisitioned 681,000 tons or most of the merchant fleet, to fulfill Army and Navy transportation needs, Japan had to rely on foreign and especially British-flagged shipping for 90 per cent of its trade for the duration of the Russo-Japanese war<sup>40</sup>. In the conflict's early stages, a detachment of Russian cruisers from the Vladivostok squadron successfully broke out of the Sea of Japan through the Tsugarū Strait into the Pacific and began raiding merchantmen plying Japan's eastern coasts. More damaging than the physical destruction caused by these raids was the resulting increase in insurance rates, the suspension of selected shipping services from Great Britain and the effect on public morale until the squadron was finally disabled in August 1904. This first experience of commerce-raiding, though much to the Navy's embarrassment, did not prompt a serious re-evaluation about the defence of merchant shipping<sup>41</sup>. The overriding naval concern in the wars against China and Russia was the protection of military sea lines of communication.

#### Phase II: Uncertainty, austerity and expansionism, 1906-1936.

With the Russian naval threat neutralised and Japan's position in Korea firmly established, the nation's immediate security aims had been met and the direction of defence policy was no longer so obviously determined. In April 1907, the Imperial Defence Policy (*teikoku kokubō hōshin*) was inaugurated as an attempt to codify national threat perceptions and force requirements in this new period of strategic uncertainty. In addition to 25 standing army divisions, the '8:8' plan called for a fleet composed of eight battleships and eight cruisers. Great Britain was still Japan's ally, but the other foreign powers featured in the Policy were Russia, Germany and France, the agents of Japan's humiliation in 1895, as well as the United States. The addition of the United States came at the insistence of the Imperial Navy<sup>42</sup>. With Russia discounted as a naval challenger after Tsushima, the Imperial Navy cast a wary eye eastwards to the United States as its long-term rival, concerned at the how the opening of the Panama canal and the projected fortification of bases in Guam and the

<sup>39</sup> Julian S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1988, p 309n. Corbett was commissioned to write a confidential history of the Russo-Japanese War for the War Staff at the Admiralty.

<sup>40</sup> Nomura Minoru, *Kaisenshi ni Manabu* ('Learning from the History of War at Sea'), Bungei Shunju, Tokyo, 1994, p 75.

<sup>41</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, pp 107-09.

<sup>42</sup> In 1901, Japan possessed a larger fleet than that of the United States, but by 1907 the United States had a superiority of eleven battleships. (Ibid. pp 146-49).

Philippines would affect the naval balance in the Pacific<sup>43</sup>. Japan's suspicions were matched in Washington, and political relations were further aggravated by two recurrent sources of tension over the 'Open Door' to China and Japanese migration to North America. These tensions were contained, but the British, for their part, felt sufficiently apprehensive to renegotiate the Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1911, to exclude the United States from its terms<sup>44</sup>.

As the founder of a Japanese naval doctrine distinct from western tutelage, Akiyama Saneyuki culled from Japan's conflicts with China and Russia a number of precepts and beliefs which according to Mark Peattie did much to shape the pre-war course of the Imperial Navy<sup>45</sup>. At the Naval War College in Tsukiji, Akiyama helped instill a respect for planning, training and logistics and developed an operational concept designed to inflict attrition on an enemy fleet by the launching of forward attacks prior to committing the Combined Fleet<sup>46</sup>. Central to its success would be Japan's ability to acquire 'big ships and big guns' (*taikan kyohōshugi*) capable of overcoming the quantity of any opposing battle line with the quality of its own<sup>47</sup>. Akiyama developed his theories after the Russo-Japanese war, when Togo's tactical initiative at Tsushima had paved the way for a strategic victory over a numerically superior foe. Having delivered success in Japan's limited wars against China and Russia, the strategy of seeking a decisive fleet encounter was adapted by Akiyama to meet the hypothetical threat of an American battle fleet advancing across the Pacific. Akiyama's other legacy was the emphasis he placed on non-material factors in achieving victory. Belief in the triumph of spiritual over material elements in war, if not unique to Japan, was culturally deep-rooted and has been ascribed to the martial legacy of the *samurai* class<sup>48</sup>. In the years following Tsushima the Imperial Navy faced no immediate threat to its control over surrounding waters, and had little need to call upon spiritual or moral reinforcement to compensate for material weakness. The contradictions between

<sup>43</sup> Hector Bywater, writing in 1927, cites from the account of Franklin Roosevelt, as the former Assistant Secretary of the Navy, about "ten nervous days in the summer of 1908, (when) the United States hovered on the edge of an ultimatum from Japan" over American plans to modernise its defences in the Philippines (*Navies and Nations: A Review of Naval Developments since the Great War*, Constable and Company, London, 1927, p 152).

<sup>44</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 142, 186.

<sup>45</sup> Mark R. Peattie, 'Akiyama Saneyuki and the Emergence of Modern Japanese Naval Doctrine', *Proceedings*, January 1977, pp 61-69.

<sup>46</sup> 'Combined Fleet' (*rengō kantai*) was the name given to Imperial Navy's major battle force.

<sup>47</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 129.



rationalist and emotional strains of thinking in the Imperial Navy only surfaced in the 1930s, as it prepared to take on the United States. Akiyama's confidence in the ability of Japan's moral qualities to prevail over the industrial and military potential of the United States only grew as war approached. Reinforced in Japanese society at large by the strengthened role of state Shintoism, this faith took on a canonical appeal at all levels of the Navy.

Satō Tetsutarō, whose works on seapower appeared slightly earlier at the turn of the century, argued Japan's need of an oceanic defence posture extending well beyond the requirements for local defence<sup>49</sup>. In Satō's notion of command of the seas (*seikaiken*), though vaguely defined, lay the seeds of the Imperial Navy's commitment to offence as the best means of defence<sup>50</sup>. His legacy has been more concretely identified in the practice of setting a ratio of capital ships to maintain against a potential enemy<sup>51</sup>. After naval threat perceptions centered on the United States, for planning purposes at least, the powerful Operations Division of the General Staff determined that the Imperial Navy needed to maintain 70 per cent of the US Navy's first-line strength in heavy cruisers<sup>52</sup>. More broadly, Satō's influence on the Navy is associated with territorial expansionism enshrined in the concept of a 'south advance' (*nanshin*). Since its creation, the Imperial Navy had enjoyed independent access to the emperor, its constitutional status equal with that of the army, although its political influence was never as strong. The intense rivalry and suspicion which grew up between both institutions was one of the most destructive and unresolved features of the governmental system set up under Meiji<sup>53</sup>. Once the Army established a permanent foothold in Korea and Manchuria the Navy risked losing status, not to mention its budgetary

<sup>48</sup> See Mark P. Parillo. *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 26.

<sup>49</sup> Most famously in *Teikoku kokubō shi ron* ("On Imperial Defence History").

<sup>50</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, pp 135-41.

<sup>51</sup> Capital ships refers to battleships, heavy cruisers and, later, aircraft carriers.

<sup>52</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 235.

<sup>53</sup> Hostility between the Navy and Army was of a different order to the inter-service rivalry experienced in all large militaries. In the 1930s for example, the Navy fortified the Ministry in Kasumigaseki against the possibility of Army assault while Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku, the future chief of the Combined Fleet was flanked by Navy bodyguards to deter assassination by the Army unit assigned to protect him. The jealously-guarded autonomy of both services bred not only confusion and duplication of effort but prevented a centralised command structure. Incredibly, the Navy concealed preparations for the Pearl Harbor attack from General Tojo until November 1941 and later masked the full extent of its losses at Midway from the premier (Mark P. Parillo. *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 19-24; and Edwin P. Hoyt, *The Militarists: The Rise of Japanese Militarism Since WWII*, Donald I. Fine, New York, 1985, p 101).

allocation, without a rival strategy of its own. Despite the Navy's generally moderate reputation, its more impulsive officers were inspired by Satō's dream of carving out an area of influence to the south. The obvious problem in the 1900s was that this meant certain collision with the western colonial powers, which between them already controlled most of Southeast Asia and the South Pacific. Logically, the path of least resistance for Japan's imperial ambitions lay in China's vast north-eastern hinterland, with the Army as its chief agent. The concept of a 'south advance' to trump the army's 'north advance' (*hokushin*) received a more concrete imperative once East Indies oil became a coveted commodity, but made little practical sense until the First World War created an opening for Japan in the Pacific.

After joining the Allies in late August 1914, Japan moved against German possessions north of the Equator in China and the Pacific. With Germany virtually powerless to resist, by 1915 Japan had seized the Kaiser's possessions in Shantung, expanded its commercial concessions across north-eastern China and incorporated Germany's island territories from Palau to the Marshalls. However, Japan's virtually bloodless extension into the Pacific did not fundamentally shift the centre of gravity of expansionism away from the Imperial Army in Northeast Asia, where by 1917, 50,000 troops were deployed in Shantung and Manchuria, substantial forces in Korea and a further 75,000 about to be sent to Siberia<sup>54</sup>. Japan's gains in the Pacific were recognised as League Mandates at Versailles in 1919 and supposed to remain unfortified under the terms of the Washington Naval Treaty, ratified in 1923. Though of limited economic worth, Japan's Pacific mandates held a considerable strategic value by excluding a foreign naval presence and acting as outposts to monitor US Pacific Fleet manoeuvres in peacetime. In war, they could be quickly adapted as submarine and sea-plane bases to block communications between the United States and its western Pacific possessions (the Philippines and Guam) and as logistic stepping stones for any advance on Southeast Asia.

The Imperial Navy had a secondary, but potentially instructive, involvement in convoy and antisubmarine operations during the First World War. The Australian Imperial Expeditionary Force destined for Gallipoli was provided with a Japanese escort across the

---

<sup>54</sup> The Imperial Army dragged out its intervention into the rear of the Russian Civil War until 1925 when the last Japanese troops were withdrawn from northern Sakhalin, the southern half of which had been ceded to Japan in the Treaty of Portsmouth, in 1905.



Indian Ocean in 1915. Then in 1917, at Britain's request, the Imperial Navy sent a destroyer squadron to the Mediterranean to assist in convoying allied shipping against submarines of the Central Powers<sup>55</sup>. Although its arrival had a favourable impact upon allied losses, as in the Russo-Japanese war, experience did not translate into lessons learned. Instead, in the eyes of Japan's naval staffers it was the inconclusive gun duel at Jutland which reconfirmed the primacy of the decisive fleet encounter. Overshadowed by Jutland, the German U-boat offensive against Allied shipping in the Atlantic, which had demonstrated the strategic potential of the submarine and the effectiveness of convoys, received little attention in Japan after the war, although the same might be said of the Royal Navy -- and with less excuse<sup>56</sup>. However, Japan's experience in the First World War differed from that of its Allies in that it was not a party to any of the major land offensives and untouched by the value shifts wrought among other belligerents. Japan, in fact, had a 'good' war, enhancing its economic and strategic position at the relative expense of the European powers, but it was left curiously out of place in 1919, in a war-weary world receptive to Wilsonian idealism and arms limitation. Having mastered the rules of the imperial game as late-comers, Japan's military elite saw little reason to dim their enthusiasm for expansion.

The 1920s brought economic austerity to Japan and a period which saw Japanese democratic institutions temporarily flourish; factors which kept the military in check. Smaller, recession-pinched budgets forced hard choices on the Navy, sharpened by the spiralling costs of constructing battleships with ever-bigger guns and thicker armour. This did not prevent the Navy from pushing for the construction of an '8:8:8' fleet (to be composed of twin battleship squadrons and a force of eight heavy cruisers). When plans for the fleet were trimmed to an 8:6 configuration, fiscal reality was as much the culprit as Japan's new treaty obligations. The drafters of the Washington Naval Limitations Treaty, negotiated over 1921-23, conceived it as a stabilising alternative to military alliances and arms races. With fewer resources than Great Britain or the United States, the Treaty offered Japan an escape from a cycle of competition it could not hope to win, at the psychological price of being fixed into a position of inferiority. Over strong objections from the Navy, the Foreign Ministry (*gaimushō*) settled for a capital ship ratio of 5:5:3 and a mutual agreement

<sup>55</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 169.

<sup>56</sup> Eric Grove (ed). *The Defeat of the Enemy Attack on Shipping, 1939-1945*; A Revised Edition of the (1957) Naval Staff History Volumes 1A (Text and Appendices) and 1B (Plans and Tables), The Navy Records Society/Ashgate Publishing Limited, Aldershot, 1997, pp 3-4.

to refrain from fortifying Pacific bases. This represented a loss on the 10:10:7 ratio upon which the Imperial Navy had predicated the success of its war plan against the United States. Elements in the Navy objecting to what they construed as a slight to national pride organised themselves into a Fleet Faction to oppose the Treaty<sup>57</sup>. While the Fleet Faction was unable to prevent Japan's accession to the Washington Treaty in 1923 it won a partial victory when the Imperial Defence Policy was revised, in deference to the Navy, designating the United States as Japan's number one enemy ahead of the Soviet Union and China. In a portent of Japan's international isolation, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was allowed to expire in the same year.

Belief in the dominance of surface battle-fleets held firm in Japan, as it did within the US Navy and Royal Navy, even as improvements in submarines and naval aviation chipped away at the 'capital' status of the battleship, still defined by the throwing distance of its guns. Failing to see a strategic threat to merchant shipping in these new technologies naturally inhibited the ability of Japan's naval planners to develop their own doctrine for commerce protection or commerce warfare. Japanese submarines, of which several classes were developed in the 1920s and 1930s had the range, endurance and armament to equip them for both roles. The J-class submarines were capable of sustained operations off the US west coast, and were armed with torpedoes superior in range, speed and payload to their American counterparts throughout the Pacific war. A British strategist wondered at the time whether a larger submarine force would make Japan's coastal waters and the Yellow Sea impregnable against raiding squadrons<sup>58</sup>. Yet the Imperial Navy's inability to develop a submarine doctrine independent of the surface fleet was not simply a failure of imagination. Underlying the Navy's preoccupation with offensive doctrine was the strategic rationale that Japan could only hope to prevail in a short war with the United States, forcing a negotiated settlement before US industry could bring its greater mobilisation capacity to bear. Unable to rebuild its fleet quickly enough the larger power would be obliged to seek

---

<sup>57</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 200.

<sup>58</sup> G.A. Ballard cited in Bywater, *Navies and Nations: A Review of Naval Developments since the Great War*, Constable and Company, London, 1927, p 204-05.

An exceptional prewar exercise, conducted in October 1940, involved Japanese submarines patrolling Tsushima Strait, the Bungo Channel (between Shikoku and Kyushu) and the approach to Tokyo Bay, against hypothetical submarine attacks on Japanese commerce. Despite the success of the simulated attacks, the high command was too perturbed by the apparent susceptibility of their submarines to radio direction-finding to develop this further as an operational concept (David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 430).



terms, as it had in 1905. To those responsible for drawing up the Navy's war plans in the 1920s, a strategy of economic blockade against an enemy with ten times Japan's industrial capacity, copious natural resources, and whose eastern seaboard lay beyond Japan's reach must have seemed illogical. Had Japanese planners developed the doctrine and tactics for interdicting US logistic sea lines of communication across the Pacific their prospects might well have been more rewarding. While unlikely to have stopped US amphibious operations during the Pacific, Japan's capacity to complicate Allied efforts would probably have justified the investment. During the Battle of the Atlantic, reports of the success enjoyed by German U-boats against Allied shipping until 1942 did nothing to jolt the Japanese naval command into rethinking submarine operations, despite all attempts at persuasion by the German naval attaché (and U-boat commander) in Tokyo, Paul Wenneker<sup>59</sup>. As a result, Japan's naval submarine doctrine and design remained welded to the Combined Fleet throughout the Pacific War and the long supply chains used to sustain the US 'island-hopping' campaign went largely unharried<sup>60</sup>.

What did occupy the close attention of Japan's naval staff in the 1920s and 1930s were the anticipated communication routes of the US surface battle fleet across the Pacific. After the American Asiatic squadron in the Philippines and Guam had been neutralised, it was assumed that the US Navy would undertake a massed sally westward to retake Guam and the Philippines. Japanese naval strategy was originally based on luring the American fleet to a line between the Bonin and Mariana Islands where the superior gunnery of the Combined Fleet could inflict a Tsushima-type blow despite its numerical inferiority. It was expected that the bulk of the US Pacific Fleet would advance along one of four lines of approach to the western Pacific. The first of these, the north circular route, was the shortest but discounted owing to its rough weather conditions. The second, South Pacific route was considered overly long. This left the direct route from Hawaii and a south-central path through the Gilbert and Marshall island chains, both of which necessitated the capture of territory that could be converted into forward bases. After the Washington Naval Treaty pegged Japan's naval shipbuilding with the United States and Great Britain at 5:5:3 the war

<sup>59</sup> Robert Goralski and Russell W. Freeburg, *Oil & War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in WWII Meant Victory or Defeat*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1987, pp 186-189, p 199.

<sup>60</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, pp 217-19.

In the course of the war, only two campaigns were launched by Japanese submarines against Allied shipping, in the Indian Ocean in July 1942, and against shipping between Australia and the United States in spring 1943 (Eric Grove, ed., *The Defeat of the Enemy Attack on Shipping, 1939-1945*, p 156).

plan was broadened to include attacks on the advancing US fleet forward of the Bonin-Mariana line, by submarines and aircraft operating out of the Pacific Mandates. Provided that a roughly equalised American fleet would obligingly steam into the path of the Combined Fleet it was believed that the Imperial Navy could overcome its quantitative disadvantage and prevail in a short conflict<sup>61</sup>.

The Navy's battle strategy was not without its own critics. In the 1930s, air power advocates sensitive to the impact of evolving technologies and tactics, including the wartime commander of the Combined Fleet, Yamamoto Isoroku, questioned the tethering of Imperial Navy doctrine to the decisive fleet encounter on the grounds that aircraft were eroding the traditional primacy of battleships in naval warfare<sup>62</sup>. In place of battleships, the advent of fully-fledged aircraft carriers from the late 1920s promised to introduce a quantum leap in offensive reach. Others doubted the ability of the Imperial Navy to concentrate sufficient force or to manoeuvre tactically in the open expanses of the Pacific, unlike in the confines of the Tsushima Strait, or Yellow Sea. Continuing to rely on a reactive strategy of drawing the enemy fleet into the superior gun range of the Japanese battle line was, they argued, no longer credible<sup>63</sup>. Nevertheless, the maxim of 'big ships and big guns' continued to dictate procurement into the 1930s, reaching its zenith with the laying down of the leviathan super-battleships, *Yamato* and *Musashi*, displacing over 60,000 tons each<sup>64</sup>. Only once Japan withdrew from the treaty regime in 1936 and began to quadruple military spending did Japan's carrier force come into its own. However, the effect was merely to supplant one offensive orthodoxy with another, obscuring the Navy's weakness in escort vessels<sup>65</sup>. Had the naval limitations regime not been extended to cover destroyers, sub-chasers and lesser vessels in the 1930 London Naval Treaty it is likely they would have continued to be marginalised by budgetary pressures.

From the mid-1930s, developments in the domestic and international political environment brought war closer. The gradual accession of army hardliners to power in Japan after 1930

<sup>61</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, pp 201-205.

<sup>62</sup> Edwin P. Hoyt, *The Militarists: The Rise of Japanese Militarism Since WWII*, Donald I. Fine, New York, 1985, p 106.

<sup>63</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 475-76.

<sup>64</sup> Displacement tonnage is used for the total weight of a ship and its contents, primarily for warships.

<sup>65</sup> Mark P. Parillo, *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 16.



intensified after 1936<sup>66</sup>. By the mid-1930s, the Fleet Faction had bested moderate elements for control of the Navy and started cooperating with the army to subvert civilian control, culminating in the military-run cabinet of Tojo Hideki, a serving army general, in 1940<sup>67</sup>. The Imperial Defence Policy was revised for the third and final time in 1936. The revised document identified the United States and Soviet Union as equal threats, as a compromise between Imperial Army and Navy threat perceptions, while China and Great Britain (for the first time) were added as subordinate enemies. The uncertainty and austerity of the 1920s and early 1930s had given way to the clear expectation of war, for which preparations began in earnest. The existence of four major potential adversaries spoke on one level of confusion between the Imperial Army and Navy over Japan's strategic direction<sup>68</sup>. More fundamentally, it revealed the slide in Japan's international relations since the Manchurian Incident in 1931. Responsibility for the deterioration of Japan's diplomatic position up to this point lay largely with the Kwantung Army's expansionist policies in China. However, from the late 1930s, the Imperial Navy's ambition and its thirst for oil caused it to lead the charge into Southeast Asia.

### Phase III: Oil -- life-blood for the Navy, 1937-45.

After the idea of a Mahanian clash with the United States took root in the Imperial Navy in the 1920s, Japan's dependence upon the United States for 80 per cent of its oil, even more in the case of high-octane aviation fuel, loomed large in the minds of naval policy-makers, seeding the idea for the seizure of the oil-rich East Indies. Japanese ship designers had early on realised the advantages, in range and speed, to be gained from oil's high calorific value as a bunker fuel, and were replacing coal-fired warships prior to the First World War<sup>69</sup>. The flip-side of this increased military performance for Japan was that of all the powers it was the most vulnerable to a cut-off of overseas supplies. A single battleship of the Combined Fleet burned over 1,000 tons of oil to maintain its top speed over 24 hours<sup>70</sup>. In 1940, the

<sup>66</sup> In February, an abortive army revolt in Tokyo paved the way for a purge of moderate politicians and later in the year the army bypassed the *gaimushō* to conclude the anti-Comintern Pact with Italy and Germany, preparing the ground for the Axis pact.

<sup>67</sup> Edwin P. Hoyt, *The Militarists: The Rise of Japanese Militarism Since WWII*, Donald I. Fine, New York, 1985, p 92, 93.

<sup>68</sup> The Navy's Operational Plan for 1939 postulated *simultaneous* operations against four enemies including the Soviet Union (David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 466).

<sup>69</sup> 'Bunker' is fuel used for boiler-firing in ships. Bunker oil and heavy oil are the same thing. Japanese experiments with oil-fired boilers date back to the 1880s.

<sup>70</sup> Figure for the *Mutsu* from Mark P. Parillo, *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 41-42.

Navy accounted for one quarter of the national consumption of 100,000 barrels per day<sup>71</sup>. Domestic production had by that time barely reached 10,000 barrels per day, including synthetics<sup>72</sup>. Among independent exporters, the Soviet-controlled half of Sakhalin offered proximity and huge potential but was politically undependable<sup>73</sup>. Great Britain, for its part, consumed most of the oil produced in Persia, Burma and northern Borneo. By far the most promising commercial prospect were the oil fields of the Netherlands East Indies which could potentially yield up to 10 million tons per year, enough in theory to meet Japan's combined military and civilian fuel demands at full production. The colonial government was reluctant, however, to increase Japan's allocation beyond 20,000 barrels per day, or one-fifth of its import requirements<sup>74</sup>. The cheapest and most abundant source left open was the United States.

The Navy fell back on two strategies to lessen its vulnerability; synthetic production and stockpiling. Japan's synthetics programme yielded much more disappointing results than in Germany and despite the hopes placed in Manchurian oil shales as a captive source of petroleum, failed to deliver oil in strategic quantities. Oil stockpiling dated back to 1909 and accelerated in the late 1920s when the conversion of the fleet to oil-fired boilers was completed<sup>75</sup>. The Imperial Navy's potential oil weakness was apparent at the time, leading Hector Bywater to predict, in 1927, that Japan would retain mostly coal-fired warships<sup>76</sup>. In 1931, the Navy had 3 million tons of oil in its stores which, according to its earlier estimates, would meet wartime needs for one year based on the projected fuel consumption of the assembled fleet sailing at 24 knots<sup>77</sup>. General stockpiling was made compulsory under the Oil Industry Law, passed in 1934, bringing all petroleum imports under

---

<sup>71</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 408-409; and Robert Goralski and Russell W. Freeburg, *Oil & War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in WWII Meant Victory or Defeat*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1987, p 93-94.

<sup>72</sup> Goralski and Freeburg, *Ibid.* Appendix 14, Sources of Petroleum in Japan Proper, 1938-1945, p 348.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* p 100.

On a purely speculative note had Japan's attempts in the 1920s to purchase Sakhalin outright from the Soviet Union proved successful, history might have been different.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* p 95.

<sup>75</sup> Mark P. Parillo. *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 40.

<sup>76</sup> *Navies and Nations: A Review of Naval Developments since the Great War*, Constable and Company, London, 1927, p 200, 211. Unfortunately, Bywater also predicted that Pearl Harbor was "secure from all save spasmodic or casual attack" and that "a Japanese expedition against Hawaii is never likely to take place".

<sup>77</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 406.



government control<sup>78</sup>. By 1936, the Navy's stockpile of oil products had advanced to 3.5 million tons. However, so had the Navy General Staff's estimates of their fuel requirements -- to 3.5 million tons in bunker per year, plus 440,000 tons of aviation fuel<sup>79</sup>. After 1937, a combination of the Navy's involvement in China operations, intensified training, and the expansion of the fleet siphoned off an unforeseen volume of oil, retarding the stockpiling effort.

Impending war with the United States threatened disaster for the Navy unless alternative oil supplies could be secured in short order. The colonial powers, which had stood in the way of the Navy's 'south advance' ever since Satō Tetsutarō's day, experienced a sudden weakening of their position in Southeast Asia with the outbreak of war in Europe. A narrow window opened, framed by military opportunity in Southeast Asia on one side and the prospect of an American oil embargo and runaway arms buildup on the other. It was assumed that any move on the East Indies would necessitate control of the Philippines and Malaya, meaning war with the United States and Great Britain. A further diplomatic squeeze on the beleaguered Dutch East Indies administration in the face of Dutch colonial intransigence, even after Holland was occupied, resulted in an agreement to supply Japan with 72,000 barrels daily for six months, in November 1940. This still fell well short of Japanese expectations. Facing a mounting tide of suspicion in the United States, Japan embarked on an all-out purchasing campaign to procure as much crude as possible on the open market and especially to increase its stocks of American high-octane aviation fuel<sup>80</sup>. In early 1941, the Army High Command commissioned a report from the Economic Mobilisation Bureau of the War Ministry outlining two scenarios. Japan could either opt immediately for war with Great Britain and the United States, expect shipping losses leading to oil shortages and industrial disruption after two years, or face an economic blockade that would eventually compel it to accede to American demands on China or face

---

<sup>78</sup> Nakamura Takafusa, *Lectures on Modern Japanese Economic History 1926-1994*, LTCB International Library Foundation, 1994, p 72.

<sup>79</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 408, and Mark P. Parillo. *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 43.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. p 407.

According to Nakamura, the reason Japan did not declare war on China in 1937 was in order to maintain commercial access to the US market out of concern over the terms of the Neutrality Act, which barred US exports to any belligerent nation (Op. Cit. p 106).

ruin. The study concluded that war gave Japan better options, but warned its forecast of two years of self-sufficiency in oil might be shortened if vital sea lanes were blocked<sup>81</sup>.

On July 2, an Imperial Conference was convened to put the royal imprimatur on the Navy's planned 'south advance', describing it as necessary for "the security and preservation of the nation". The setting up of forward bases in southern Indochina, relinquished by French Vichy authorities under threat of Japanese attack, triggered the freezing of Japanese assets in the United States and a total oil embargo on August 1<sup>82</sup>. The hawkish chief of the Navy General Staff, Admiral Nagano Osami, was appraised of the risks of war with the United States but nonetheless put his view before the emperor that it was better to fight than accept defeat through economic strangulation, thus "risking war rather than shame"<sup>83</sup>. With its stockpiles being depleted at the rate of 2,900 barrels per hour, the Navy staff committed itself to seeking war at the earliest opportunity<sup>84</sup>. In the early autumn of 1941, Admiral Yamamoto's pioneering advances in carrier operations, developed over the summer, injected a new and tantalising option for the Imperial High Command, the possibility of a pre-emptive attack on the US Pacific Fleet which had relocated from its west coast bases to Pearl Harbor in 1940<sup>85</sup>. Insecurity about its fuel supply built up over 15 years had become the leading *casus belli* for the Imperial Navy, pushing it into the enormous gamble of attacking the United States and invading Southeast Asia simultaneously<sup>86</sup>.

The Navy entered the Pacific War with 3.6 million tons of bunker fuel, 490,000 tons of aviation fuel and 1.4 million tons of crude, accounting for a total of around 5.5 million tons of oil products out of a nationally stockpiled total of nearly 8 million tons<sup>87</sup>. The Cabinet

---

<sup>81</sup> Robert Goralski and Russell W. Freeburg, *Oil & War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in WWII Meant Victory or Defeat*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1987, pp 95-100.

<sup>82</sup> John Toland, *The Rising Sun: The Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire*, Bantam Books, New York, 1970, pp 94-96; Japan had moved into northern Indochina in September 1940, but the United States had stopped short of including oil in its trade sanctions for fear of precipitating war.

<sup>83</sup> Mark P. Parillo, *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 31.

<sup>84</sup> Robert Goralski and Russell W. Freeburg, *Oil & War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in WWII Meant Victory or Defeat*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1987, p 102.

<sup>85</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 475.

<sup>86</sup> Although Japan's designs on Southeast Asia originated with the Navy, the Army's preference was for an attack on Malaya rather than the Philippines, which the Navy felt should have priority in order to secure its lines of communication. This difference was resolved with a compromise to initiate simultaneous attacks on December 8. (David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 468).

<sup>87</sup> Mark P. Parillo, *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 43-44.



Planning Board estimated that it would be able to recoup 850,000 kilolitres from Southeast Asia in 1942, 2.6 million in 1943 and 5.3 million in the third. Thus it was projected that the draw-down of Japan's stockpiles over two years would be offset by imports from the 'southern regions'<sup>88</sup>. Until the 1930s, the Navy's plans for war with the United States had not extended far beyond the waters north of Taiwan and the Northeast Asian littoral. Yet in 1942, the scope of its operations rippled out to encompass Hawaii to the east, the Aleutians to the north, the Indian Ocean to the west and the Coral Sea to the south. Following the Navy's inability to deliver a knock-out blow to the US Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor or Midway, its fuel calculations went hopelessly awry. In fact the Imperial Navy fought three major sea battles, Midway, the Philippine Sea/Marianas and Leyte Gulf, as well as several lesser engagements instead of the single decisive encounter anticipated. These three main battles alone consumed over 1 million tons of oil. Unsurprisingly, the Navy's petroleum consumption during the war turned out to be double its prewar estimates<sup>89</sup>. To put this in perspective, one calculation puts the Navy's petroleum use at 60 per cent of national consumption during the Pacific War<sup>90</sup>.

Given the determining role of oil in Japan's naval strategy, the question of tanker capacity received belated attention. The Navy operated its own tankers, but began to subsidise civilian construction heavily in the 1930s. In 1934, Japan owned some of the largest tankers then in existence, but the fleet only totalled 39 ships and 120,000 tons. Tonnage tripled to 364,000 in 1940, and because the new additions to the fleet were also faster, efficiency improved fourfold<sup>91</sup>. Nevertheless, the essential modesty of Japan's prewar tanker fleet is easily appreciated when compared with opposing countries. In 1940, Great Britain boasted 450 tankers of 3,235,000 tons, and the US tanker fleet totalled 2,824,000 tons<sup>92</sup>. A special subsidy for tanker construction in Japan was introduced in 1941 enlarging the fleet to 94

---

<sup>88</sup> Nakamura Takafusa, *Lectures on Modern Japanese Economic History 1926-1994*, LTCB International Library Foundation, 1994, p 110.

Prewar Navy estimates for East Indies production, cited by Evans and Peattie were much higher, at 2 million tons in 1942, 6 million in 1943, and 10 million for 1944. (Op. Cit. pp 594-595 n.58).

<sup>89</sup> Mark P. Parillo, *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 28; and David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, pp 406-11, p 503.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid. p 410.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. p 396-97.

<sup>92</sup> Robert Goralski and Russell W. Freeburg, *Oil & War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in WWII Meant Victory or Defeat*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1987, pp 340 Appendix 4 (World Tanker Fleet, 1940-1945).

ships representing 575,000 tons<sup>93</sup>. This was still inadequate to jointly meet civilian and military demand, and Japan stayed dependent on American, British and Dutch tankers right up to Pearl Harbor. A crash wartime construction effort expanded the tanker fleet to a peak of 834,000 tons at the end of 1943.

On May 8, 1942, Japan's suffered an early setback to its hopes for oil production in Southeast Asia when a patrolling US submarine sank the *Taiyō Maru*, carrying a party of Japanese oil experts *en route* to organise production in the captured East Indies oil fields<sup>94</sup>. However, for the first full year of the conflict, the criticality of the oil situation remained latent. In its initial conquests the Imperial Army captured 4 million barrels left by the retreating Allies who were also unable to complete the demolition of Southeast Asian wells. In spite of the loss of the *Taiyō Maru*, Japan was thus able to recover 70 per cent of the East Indies prewar production rate of 180,000 barrels per day within the first year<sup>95</sup>. Moreover, Allied attacks on Japanese tankers were very slow in developing, sending a mere 4,000 tons to the bottom in the whole of 1942<sup>96</sup>. As 1943 approached, Tojo and the War Cabinet felt confident that Japan had solved its energy crisis. Of the 136,000 barrels produced daily in Southeast Asia in 1943, 96,000 were locally consumed, much of this by fleet units at Singapore, and the excess sent to Japan<sup>97</sup>. But in shipping the squeeze was already being felt. Three out of every four tankers Japan owned were shuttling oil from Southeast Asia to Japan. Although an absolute increase in oil imports was achieved, from a daily average of 29,000 barrels in 1942 to 40,000 barrels in 1943, the proportion being exported to Japan declined, from 40 per cent in 1942 to 29 per cent in 1943 suggesting that inadequate transportation capacity, not production, was the limiting factor<sup>98</sup>.

<sup>93</sup> Mark P. Parillo, *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 48.

<sup>94</sup> Robert Goralski and Russell W. Freeburg, *Oil & War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in WWII Meant Victory or Defeat*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1987, pp 141-45.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p 150; after two years this was increased to 78 per cent (Mark P. Parillo, *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 45).

<sup>96</sup> Goralski and Freeburg, *Op. Cit.* p 192.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid. p 152, 190.

As with everything else, the Army and Navy ran their refining operations independently. In Southeast Asia, the Army kept all Burmese oil for itself and left the Navy a single refinery in Balikpapan, Borneo.

<sup>98</sup> Robert Goralski and Russell W. Freeburg, *Oil & War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in WWII Meant Victory or Defeat*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1987, p 191-92.

Nakamura Takafusa cites anecdotal evidence that oil was being dumped in Sumatra for lack of available tankers (*Op. Cit.* p 113).



May 8, 1942 coincidentally marked the end of the Battle of the Coral Sea, the first setback suffered by the Imperial Navy in the war and an indication that the swift victory its leaders were depending on would be elusive. The first steps to organise protection for the merchant fleet were only taken that spring, while the vital energies of the Imperial Navy were channelled into preparations for the decisive showdown expected at Midway, in June. When the US submarine offensive against Japanese shipping finally geared up in 1943 it would become known as the 'war of the *Maru*' after the generic designation for Japanese merchant vessels. In the following sections the Allied campaign against shipping is outlined before analysing Japan's maritime protection efforts in closer detail.

### III. The War of the *Maru*.

A variety of military means were at the disposal of United States and Allied forces in the campaign to destroy Japanese shipping; submarines, surface vessels, mines, coastal artillery, land-based and carrier aviation. It is testimony to the offensive power of the submarine that, as in the Atlantic, it also emerged as the dominant weapon against shipping in the Pacific, sinking 55 per cent of the 8 million tons destroyed by US forces<sup>99</sup>. In the latter stages of the war, carrier aircraft and mine-laying B-29 bombers levied an increasing toll on Japanese shipping, however it was without question the fleet submarine that broke the back of the merchant marine, and with it Japan's war economy.

Despite its ultimate success the submarine campaign against Japanese shipping began hesitantly, beset by technical and doctrinal handicaps. After the fall of the Philippines, the US submarine force was dispersed among three bases; Pearl Harbor, Fremantle and Brisbane which took time to organise in the chaos that followed the Japanese attack. The US Navy had also to contend with its own Mahanian stalwarts reluctant to abandon outmoded doctrine. As a consequence, commerce warfare against Japan was approached cautiously. For the US submarine force, the pursuit of the Imperial Navy's capital ships was considered the most important of a plethora of missions, limiting their effectiveness against

---

<sup>99</sup> The Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee, *Japanese Naval and Merchant Shipping Losses During World War II By All Causes*, Navy Department, Washington D.C., February 1947, vii, Table II (Japanese Naval and Merchant Shipping Sunk During World War II By United States Forces).

the more lightly protected merchant targets<sup>100</sup>. Many submarine commanders were replaced for lacking aggressiveness in their patrols and the main weapon in the US sub-surface inventory, the magnetic torpedo, was plagued by malfunctions<sup>101</sup>. The total Japanese tonnage sunk in 1942, 725,000 tons, amounted to no more than the combined German tally of Allied shipping in the Atlantic for February and March and fell within the margin of acceptable losses outlined by the Cabinet Planning Board before the war. The flow of strategic materials to the homeland, at around 20 million tons, remained constant on 1941 levels. Japan's merchant fleet saw off the first year of the submarine campaign with a minimal net loss of tonnage while managing to increase the size of its tanker fleet by 111,000 tons to 686,000 tons<sup>102</sup>.

US fleet submarines, operating unmolested out of Australia and Hawaii with the benefit of greater numbers, better tactics and focus built up in the first year of the war, sent 388,000 tons of tankers to the bottom in 1943. Slow to spot the Achilles Heel in Japan's war-fighting capability, the US Navy, once aware of it, prosecuted the war against Japanese merchantmen ruthlessly, targeting tankers in particular. 'Wolf-pack' tactics, on the German model, were introduced to interdict Japan's shipping where it was most concentrated, in the Luzon Strait and Empire waters<sup>103</sup>. In 1943, over 2 million tons of shipping was destroyed and Japan suffered a 3 million-ton shortfall in bulk commodities on the previous year. Home-based refineries operated at less than one-third capacity<sup>104</sup>. Mounting merchant losses exposed the shortcomings of Japan's limited shipbuilding infrastructure which proved inadequate to meet both naval and cargo vessel construction needs. Concentrating shipbuilding resources on tankers at the expense of ordinary merchant ships miraculously preserved aggregate tanker tonnage for most of 1944 at around 800,000 tons in the face of appalling losses<sup>105</sup>. However, this did nothing to improve security for those tankers actually inbound from Southeast Asia. In a more telling statistic, from a peak of 740,000 tons of oil

---

<sup>100</sup> Clay Blair describes a total of ten other operational roles for which US submarines were used (*Silent Victory: The U.S. Submarine War Against Japan*, J.B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia and New York, 1975, pp 357-58).

<sup>101</sup> John Winton, *Convoy: The Defence of Sea Trade 1890-1990*, Michael Joseph, 1983, p 314, and Robert Goralski and Russell W. Freeburg, *Oil & War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in WWII Meant Victory or Defeat*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1987, p 192.

<sup>102</sup> Clay Blair, *Silent Victory: The U.S. Submarine War Against Japan*, J.B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia and New York, 1975, p 360.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid. p 509-10.

<sup>104</sup> Robert Goralski and Russell W. Freeburg, *Oil & War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in WWII Meant Victory or Defeat*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1987, p 196.



imported to Japan in the second quarter of 1943, the flow fell off in the third quarter of 1944 to just 178,000 tons<sup>106</sup>. In the final 15 months of the war, just 9 per cent of oil shipments from Southeast Asia made it through to Japan<sup>107</sup>.

In 1944, the anti-shipping campaign crippled the Japanese war economy. In that year, US submarines alone sank over 600 ships of 2.38 million tons, exceeding their tally for the rest of the war<sup>108</sup>. Japan's merchant fleet which started the year at nearly 5 million tons was halved by the end of December<sup>109</sup>. The successor organisation to the Cabinet Planning Board acknowledged at the end of fiscal 1944, "Damage to shipping, chiefly from enemy submarines, has been far greater than (sic) anticipated just prior to the war and has far outstripped the volume of vessels built"<sup>110</sup>. The report also admitted that military production and transportation had been maintained "at the sacrifice of the civilian sector". The flow of bulk commodities to Japan slumped to 10 million tons, half that of the total three years previously. US offensive efforts were redoubled by contrast. In February 1944, 52,000 tons of tankers were among 186,000 tons of Japanese shipping decimated in a 2-day air-raid on Truk, the Combined Fleet anchorage in the Caroline Islands<sup>111</sup>. Air attacks and mining directed at Japanese refining facilities at source in Southeast Asia also forced the closure of the Navy oil refinery at Balikpapan. By this stage, aircraft carriers were numerous enough to allow their use against merchant ships, when previously Imperial Navy targets had exclusive priority. Once US forces were re-established in the Philippines in late 1944, the shipping routes from Southeast Asia to the homeland became far more hazardous. Attempts at fighting tanker convoys through to Japan most often resulted in their wholesale

---

<sup>105</sup> Mark P. Parillo. *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 238, Appendix, Table A.4 (Japanese Tanker Tonnage During World War Two).

<sup>106</sup> Mark P. Parillo. *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, Appendix, p 247, Table A.11. (Oil Production in Subjugated Areas and Imports to Japan during World War II).

<sup>107</sup> Mark P. Parillo. *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 215.

<sup>108</sup> Blair, citing post-war credited records, gives a higher total of 2.7 million tons (*Silent Victory: The U.S. Submarine War Against Japan*, J.B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia and New York, 1975, p 816)

<sup>109</sup> Mark P. Parillo. *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, Table A.5. (Control of Japanese Merchant Marine Tonnage during World War II), p 239; and Table A.9 (Japanese Shipping Losses During World War II), p 243. Nakamura's figure for Japanese ship losses in 1944 is higher, at 4.1 million tons (Op. Cit. p 114).

<sup>110</sup> Cited in Ibid. p 115.

<sup>111</sup> Robert Goralski and Russell W. Freeburg, *Oil & War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in WWII Meant Victory or Defeat*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1987, pp 196-97.

destruction, and after the first quarter of 1945 oil imports ceased altogether<sup>112</sup>. For the Imperial Army and Navy the loss of the Southeast Asian shipping lanes threatened not just supplies to the home base, but the flow of arms and ammunition to their forward units<sup>113</sup>. Japanese authorities turned to increasingly desperate measures to supplement their dwindling petroleum stocks. A campaign to process pine roots for aviation fuel was launched but ultimately yielded only 3,000 barrels of substandard aviation fuel. Bunker fuel was supplemented with large quantities of alcohol. Unbeknown to the crews of the B-29s who began to assault Japan *en masse* in 1945, the refineries and oil storage areas they were assigned to hit had mostly run dry. Symbolising the desperate straits of the Imperial Navy at the end of the war, the *Yamato* was dispatched on a suicidal foray to engage the American invasion fleet at Okinawa on April 8, 1945. Fuel was so short by this time that only 4,000 tons of heavy oil were spared for the mission, barely adequate for the superbattleship to execute its attack run<sup>114</sup>. When Japan capitulated four months later, 4,000 tons was all the bunker oil left in the country. Following the surrender, the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey concluded:

“The war against shipping was perhaps the most decisive single factor in the collapse of the Japanese economy and logistic support of Japanese military and naval power. Submarines accounted for the majority of vessel sinkings and the greater part of the reduction in tonnage”<sup>115</sup>.

US submarines in the Pacific sank 55 per cent (4.8 million tons) of the total Japanese shipping destroyed, compared with 60 per cent (14.57 million tons) of the total Allied

<sup>112</sup> Mark P. Parillo, *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, Appendix, Table A.11. (Oil Production in Subjugated Areas and Imports to Japan during World War Two), p 247.

<sup>113</sup> Goralski and Freeburg thus explain the Imperial Navy's decision to fight the US Navy for control of the Philippines rather than pull back the fleet for a defence of home waters, quoting from the Chief of the Combined Fleet Admiral Toyoda Soemu: “Should we lose in the Philippines operations, even though the fleet should be left, the shipping lane to the south would be completely cut off so that the fleet, if it should come back to Japanese waters, could not obtain its fuel supply. If it should remain in southern waters, it could not receive supplies of ammunition and arms. There would be no sense in saving the fleet at the expense of the loss of the Philippines”. (Robert Goralski and Russell W. Freeburg, *Oil & War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in WWII Meant Victory or Defeat*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1987, p 319).

<sup>114</sup> Small by comparison with the *Yamato*'s fuel capacity, the diversion of four thousand tons was profligate nonetheless, denying the Navy's escort forces of more than half their average monthly fuel allocation in 1945. The diversion of fuel away from commerce protection to permit the futile sortie of the *Yamato* epitomises the navy's obsession with ‘big ships and big guns’ virtually to the last drop of oil (Mark P. Parillo, *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 30).

<sup>115</sup> Cited in Clay Blair, *Silent Victory: The U.S. Submarine War Against Japan*, J.B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia and New York, 1975, p 879.



shipping sunk by their German counterparts in the Atlantic<sup>116</sup>. While the U-boat offensive is estimated to have cost Germany 781 submarines and 39,000 men, the destruction meted out by the submarines of the United States Pacific Command was achieved at the relatively economical cost of 3,500 men and 52 submarines lost to all causes. D.W. Waters claims that through the agency of just 5 per cent of the total Allied military power deployed in the Pacific, "the defeat of Japan was primarily the result of sea blockade" -- a feat which is "one of the least publicised facts of history"<sup>117</sup>.

#### **IV. The inadequate protection of merchant shipping.**

The main reason for the Imperial Navy's abject failure to protect Japan's merchant fleet in the Second World War was that its doctrine, structure and philosophy had become almost entirely geared towards annihilating the US battle fleet in an intense conflict of limited duration. When the failure of this strategy was shown up at Midway, in June 1942, the Navy was unable to adjust to a more defensive mode of warfare that prioritised the defence of merchant shipping. Portents of Japan's vulnerability to blockade date back as far as the Russo-Japanese war and at least a theoretical understanding of the problems involved existed within the Imperial Navy prior to 1941. However, efforts to put maritime commerce protection into action, were hesitant and piecemeal until hopelessly late in the war.

The "defence of general merchant shipping routes" was mentioned in the Imperial Defence Policy of 1907, but only insofar as this did not interfere with the Navy's primary purpose, the destruction of the enemy fleet. Subsequent revisions of the Imperial Defence Policy concentrated on the need for a "rapid war and decisive encounter" (*sokusen sokketsu*)<sup>118</sup>. Neither the surface threat to merchantmen in the Russo-Japanese war, nor Japan's participation in anti-submarine warfare in the Mediterranean in 1917-18 made a lasting impression on Imperial Navy doctrine. Yet the importance of protecting far-flung sea lines of communication was clearly understood in certain quarters. An article in the 1927 edition of *Brassey's Naval and Shipping Annual* on 'Japan's Naval Policy' by Commander Sato Ichiro, reveals an early appreciation of the new vulnerability to which industrialisation had exposed Japan:

<sup>116</sup> John Winton, *Convoy: The Defence of Sea Trade 1890-1990*, Michael Joseph, 1983, p 314, and Robert Goralski and Russell W. Freeburg, *Oil & War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in WWII Meant Victory or Defeat*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1987, p 319.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. p 246-47.

<sup>118</sup> Nomura Minoru. *Kaisen Shi ni Manabu*, Bungei Shunju, Tokyo, 1994, p 278.

"Japan is poor in natural resources and, to supply the factories, we must get raw materials from abroad. We must get many of our manufactured goods from foreign markets, too. To do this our sea-communications must be safe and secure".

It is in this context of protecting sea communications that Sato justified the existence of the Imperial Navy as "an absolute guarantee of national existence". Up to the Russo-Japanese war, the role of the Navy had been simpler, confined to the "destruction of the enemy fleet and the safety of the sea-communications for the supply of expeditionary forces"<sup>119</sup>. With industrialisation, Sato realised that trade protection had risen to become a core requirement equal to defence from invasion. Sato's analysis of Japan's vulnerability to trade disruption was remarkably prescient considering the importance he attached not just to trade flows across the Sea of Japan, Yellow and East China Seas, but to Japan's more remote sea lanes.

Sato divided overseas trade protection into three areas of priority for the Japanese Navy. Noting that a third of Japan's imports were carried across the East China Sea from the Asian mainland, he identified the security of these waters as Japan's first naval duty. Guarding the sea lanes in the China Sea, used to draw supplies of oil, rubber and metals from Southeast Asia, was its "almost as essential" duty. The third mission of the Imperial Navy would be to keep open the more distant supply routes to Europe and America. Sato's concern with securing the sea route to Southeast Asia accurately predicted a strategic weak-point that emerged during the Pacific War:

"... an item of the utmost importance coming from farther afield is fuel oil. One-half of the oil imports of Japan is drawn from the Dutch Indies<sup>120</sup>, and the freedom of that sea-route will be absolutely necessary for her power of resistance. The control of the routes in the China Sea is of great value to Japan, too, for the supply of rubber, clothing materials, and metals. *The protection of trade in these waters is*

<sup>119</sup> Sato Ichiro, *The Naval Policy of Japan, Brassey's Naval and Shipping Annual 1927*, William Cowes and Sons, London, p 26.

<sup>120</sup> After the price of oil from the Dutch East Indies rose in the second half of the 1920s, Japan relied increasingly on cheaper oil from California, greatly lessening its dependence on Southeast Asia (David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 567, n.68).



*therefore a charge against the Japanese Navy almost as essential as its first duty*"<sup>121</sup>. (Italics added).

Writing during the international naval limitations regime of the 1920s, Sato advocated the construction of auxilliary ships to extend ship protection south of the East China Sea, but such pleas fell mostly on deaf ears. In 1929, a communication was passed to the emperor written by the Naval Chief of Staff Kato Kanji on the necessity of protecting sea lanes, but failed to spell out any concrete recommendations<sup>122</sup>. Contemporary foreign analysts were also sensitive to Japan's "essential sea routes, the vital arteries through which her life-blood flows"<sup>123</sup>, while a US prewar intelligence assessment concluded that "Japan's lines of water and land communication provide indispensable support to her sustained war production and her deployment of armed forces and material"<sup>124</sup>. Imperial Army and civilian estimates before the war flagged the importance of shipping for maintaining Japanese industry and war potential, and linked success to "the Navy's ability to secure maritime traffic". However, concerns voiced inside and outside the Navy failed to feed through into either a review of naval policy undertaken in 1928 or the revised Imperial Defence Policy of 1936, which only mentioned shipping protection in the Tsushima Strait<sup>125</sup>. Once the decision was made to capture the South-East Asian oil fields the Navy was slow to adjust existing plans despite the obvious, onerous burdens on sea transportation this would bestow. The operational plan for 1941 merely outlined the responsibility of the Navy's first-line units to protect sea communications in the waters north of Taiwan "within the limits allowed by circumstances", something that few Combined Fleet officers had either the time or inclination to consider. When quizzed about the submarine threat to shipping and convoys in mid-1941, the Navy chief of staff Admiral Nagano brushed off the concerns of cabinet members. Even when personally questioned by Hirohito about Japan's ability to "obtain and transport oil without hindrance when faced with attacks by planes and submarines based in Australia" the naval chief of staff was unruffled<sup>126</sup>. Plans to protect shipping were finally

<sup>121</sup> Sato Ichiro, *The Naval Policy of Japan*, *Brassey's Naval and Shipping Annual 1927*, William Cowes and Sons, London, p 77.

<sup>122</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 435.

<sup>123</sup> Hector Bywater, *Navies and Nations: A Review of Naval Developments since the Great War*, Constable and Company, London, 1927, pp 206-07.

<sup>124</sup> Cited in Mark P. Parillo. *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 38.

<sup>125</sup> Nomura Minoru. *Kaisen Shi ni Manabu*, Bungei Shunju, Tokyo, 1994, p 278.

<sup>126</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, pp 437-38.

extended south of Taiwan, on November 5, 1941, to include the South China, Java and Celebes Seas, through which the main Japanese invasion forces would pass. Beyond that, the commitment went no further than to “endeavour as far as possible to defend sea lanes in the area of the Pacific Mandates, the Philippines and Sea of Okhotsk”<sup>127</sup>.

Critical to such sanguine attitudes was the failure of the naval command to grasp the strategic potential of the submarine, underestimating both the capability and temperament of the United States to use its submarines as a tool of economic warfare against Japan<sup>128</sup>. The Operations Division of the Naval General Staff regarded enemy submarines and destroyers as extensions of the battle fleet, reflecting their own doctrinal preferences. Such myopia may also have been influenced by Great Britain’s attempt at the Washington Conference to ban submarine construction outright. Certain intelligence officers, Niimi in the 1920s and later Ooi Atsushi in the 1930s, had studied the German U-boat campaign in the First World War and were attuned to the sub-surface threat to merchant shipping, but were unable to influence naval policy higher up<sup>129</sup>.

During the Pacific War, Japanese shipping to and from the southern regions operated along two strategic sea lanes. The first, south-west route (*nansei kōro*) was strategically the most important, serving as Japan’s major line of communication to the East Indies and Malay Peninsula, for imports of raw materials as well as to ferry military supplies to occupied areas in Southeast Asia. The south-east route (*nantō kōro*) stretched from Japan to the Marianas and beyond to Rabaul, in New Britain. Though of lesser economic importance, the south-east route was nonetheless vital for delivering troops, weapons and ammunition to support operations in the Solomon Islands, Bismarck Archipelago and New Guinea. At the beginning of the war, ship protection was delegated to the local Navy district commands in Japan until the establishment of the First and Second Maritime Escort Forces on April 10, 1942. The First Maritime Escort Force was assigned to protect convoys from Japan to Singapore, where it retained its headquarters under a Vice-Admiral with a Shipping Control Officer (*unkōshikikan*) attached. The new unit was equipped with a force of ten aging destroyers, two torpedo boats and five converted gunboats. The Second Maritime Escort

<sup>127</sup> Nomura Minoru, *Kaisen Shi ni Manabu*, Bungei Shunju, Tokyo, 1994, p 280.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid. p 281.

<sup>129</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 431, pp 435-41.



Unit, to protect merchant shipping between Japan and Truk, was smaller, initially consisting of four destroyers, two torpedo boats and one gunboat<sup>130</sup>. A light cruiser (*Yūbari*) was added in September<sup>131</sup>. Prewar estimates had suggested a figure well in excess of 300 large escorts as the minimum needed to form a commerce protection force but the reality of finding suitable equipment for the new escort units was highly problematic<sup>132</sup>. At the beginning of the war, Japan had yet to develop a vessel expressly designed for merchant defence, while existing destroyers were “considered too valuable for pure escort work”<sup>133</sup>. Development of the *kaibōkan*, a class of small coastal defence ships of under 1,000 tons, took several years to obtain funding in the 1930s. The first of these entered service in June 1940 and only four had been commissioned by Pearl Harbor<sup>134</sup>. Originally designed to protect Japan’s northern fishing fleet, the *kaibōkan* were scaled down from their original design to divert extra funds into the super-battleship programme. According to Evans and Peattie, the super-battleships were a “diversion of the navy’s attention and the nation’s resources from one of the most critical strategic problems that the navy faced: its utter dependence on its overseas routes and the need to acquire the ships, to form the organisation, to shape the doctrine, and to develop the training that would be the most effective in protecting those sea routes”<sup>135</sup>.

In July 1942, merchant protection was up-graded with the establishment of the First Escort Fleet in Taiwan to extend coverage for Japan’s merchant shipping in the East China Sea with a fleet of around 20 vessels<sup>136</sup>. Of the forces committed, many of the destroyers -- like their captains -- were superannuated and the sub-chasers too slow and poorly-armed to venture far offshore. Lack of funding had also retarded the development of sonar and hydrophone detection technology in the 1930s which would have been invaluable to the

<sup>130</sup> John Winton, *Convoy: The Defence of Sea Trade 1890-1990*, Michael Joseph, 1983, p 314; and Robert Goralski and Russell W. Freeburg, *Oil & War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in WWII Meant Victory or Defeat*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1987, p 311.

<sup>131</sup> Nomura Minoru. *Kaisenshi ni Manabu*, Bungei Shunju, Tokyo, 1994, p 282.

<sup>132</sup> Mark P. Parillo. *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 95-96.

<sup>133</sup> Post-war interrogation of Vice Adm. Hara, Rear Adm. Sumikawa and Rear Adm. Kojima, quoted in Ibid. p 15.

<sup>134</sup> These were, in order of construction, *Senshu*, *Kunashiri*, *Ishigaki* and *Hachijō* (Nomura Minoru. *Kaisenshi ni Manabu*, Bungei Shunju, Tokyo, 1994, p 279-80).

<sup>135</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 383.

<sup>136</sup> D.W. Waters, *The Naval Review*, Vol. 76, No. 3, July 1988, p 247.

anti-submarine effort<sup>137</sup>. Twenty-six improved versions of the *kaibōkan*, in two classes (*Etorofu* and *Mikura*) each of around 1,000 tons, were eventually laid down between March 1943 and May 1944, and faster vessels equipped with better ASW weapons were later added to the escort forces. But they were continually over-stretched, unable to offer more than skeletal coverage of key choke-points<sup>138</sup>. Japanese convoys, moreover, were tiny in comparison with Anglo-American efforts in the Atlantic<sup>139</sup>.

Indifference to shipping protection in the Navy's upper echelons, aggravated by bureaucratic and inter-service rivalries, manifested itself in poor organisation. Unlike in Great Britain, where Atlantic shipping was overseen by a central committee from 1941, control over the Japanese merchant marine remained under separate Army, Navy and civilian administration until virtually the end of the war. Direction was left to be negotiated among the Army and Navy General Staffs and the civilian Shipping Control Board, created in April 1942, and the inevitable result was duplication and inefficiency. This fragmented approach was mirrored among the relevant branches of the Navy. Commerce protection was just one of several duties handled by the Defence Preparations Office of the Naval General Staff until October 1942 when a new body was created known as the Twelfth Division of the First Bureau. Yet only three staff officers were assigned to it, holding separate responsibility for convoys and routing, anti-submarine operations and the armament and communications equipment aboard merchantmen. Planners in the Navy Ministry preferred to concentrate their energies on the armament and readiness of the Combined Fleet, while in the line commands, port officers supposedly charged with shipping safety in the eight district and 'guard' units of the Imperial Navy were too habitually overburdened to give shipping protection more than cursory attention<sup>140</sup>. Escort operations in 1942 lacked an overarching mechanism to co-ordinate and standardise different procedures used for the control of shipping, convoying and distribution of cargo<sup>141</sup>. All this notwithstanding, the

<sup>137</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, pp 440-41.

<sup>138</sup> A total of three sub-chasers, for example, was assigned to screen oil tankers sailing from the navy refinery at Balikpapan through the Makassar Straits until May 1943.

<sup>139</sup> John Winton, *Convoy: The Defence of Sea Trade 1890-1990*, Michael Joseph, 1983, p 313.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid. pp 310-312; and Mark P. Parillo. *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 67.

<sup>141</sup> Robert Goralski and Russell W. Freeburg, *Oil & War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in WWII Meant Victory or Defeat*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1987, p 194.



skill of individual convoy commanders could still frustrate American submarines when operating with good intelligence<sup>142</sup>.

Mounting losses in autumn 1943 demonstrated the vulnerability of cargo vessels without proper convoy protection. In March, a Second Convoy Escort Fleet was created, ported in Saipan, with responsibility for convoys between Yokohama and Truk. But the four destroyers and two torpedo boats assigned were unequal to the task. More significantly, in November, a Grand Escort Headquarters was set up by the Chief of the General Staff, according top priority to commerce protection in all areas under its control from the Kuriles to Singapore, although its remit did not extend to the Combined and China Area Fleet sectors<sup>143</sup>. As a sign of its importance the new headquarters was put under the command of a former Minister of the Navy, Admiral Oikawa Koshiro<sup>144</sup>. However, with few officers experienced in convoying operations, the Grand Escort Headquarters continued to pay the price of the Navy's earlier indifference and frugality, having at its disposal fewer than 50 ships of 800 tons and above in addition to the 901<sup>st</sup> Air Group. The grandiose strategy developed by Admiral Oikawa's staff hardly matched the resources at their command. It relied on exploiting the partially enclosed nature of Japan's major sea lanes to Southeast Asia to shield merchant shipping from Allied submarines and air power by using Borneo, the Philippines, Taiwan, the Nansei Shotō and the Ryūkyū islands as natural buffers against the open reaches of the Pacific. Sea-air gaps between the islands would be closed by a network of minefields and radar stations. A similar plan aimed to use the Bonin and Kazan Retto (Volcano Islands) to screen Japan's shipping routes to the Marianas. Within these gigantic sanctuaries the forces of the Grand Escort Fleet would patrol sea lanes. A few minefields were laid towards implementing the scheme but the American juggernaut crossing the Pacific began to overrun the intended defensive perimeter in 1944, and the resulting calamities suffered by the Combined Fleet soon distracted the attention of the Naval General Staff<sup>145</sup>. It seems doubtful in any case that had the scheme been made

<sup>142</sup> Clay Blair, *Silent Victory: The U.S. Submarine War Against Japan*, J.B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia and New York, 1975, p 387.

<sup>143</sup> Mark P. Parillo, *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 69-70.

<sup>144</sup> John Winton, *Convoy: The Defence of Sea Trade 1890-1990*, Michael Joseph, 1983, pp 313-15.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid. p 316. Japanese press reports cited by Bywater (*Navies and Nations*, p 221) suggest that an earlier version of this plan may have existed as far back as 1922, to defend sea communications along an outer line from Kamchatka to Taiwan and an inner line between Japan and Korea. It is possible this may have been misinformation.

operational the Japanese experience with patrolled lanes would have been any more fruitful than the US and UK experience in the Atlantic (see Chapter Two).

In the first two months of 1944, US submarines sank nearly 500,000 tons of shipping causing the question of convoy escort to be brought before the emperor. Thereafter, larger and better-defended convoys were introduced, drastically improving survival rates compared to merchantmen sailing individually<sup>146</sup>. However, Japanese reversals in the Marianas from mid-1944 panicked the naval high command into placing Admiral Oikawa's escort assets at the disposal of the Combined Fleet. Scarce anti-submarine warfare vessels ill-suited to surface combat were pressed into service at Leyte Gulf and even ordered to pursue American carriers<sup>147</sup>. The convoy system subsequently began to disintegrate and escorts were organised on an *ad hoc* basis. In the war's terminal phase, Japanese naval tactics and armament were less and less of a match for the United States and the system of three-dimensional warfare it had perfected for waging on, under, above the waves and in the electro-magnetic spectrum. The use of radar in prosecuting night attacks removed the protective cloak of darkness for Japan's naval and cargo vessels alike<sup>148</sup>. Advances in signals intelligence helped steer US submarines to approximately half of their targets<sup>149</sup>. Fighting spirit was powerless to resist the overwhelming combination of superior technology and numbers. The last organised convoys to leave Southeast Asia in January 1945 quickly foundered in the South China Sea. The ultimate sanctuary of the Sea of Japan, regarded as a 'Japanese lake' since 1905, was penetrated by US submarines in June. With the merchant marine and Imperial Navy reduced to a shadow of their former glory, a centralised command authority over shipping was finally established in May, but in the circumstances it was virtually an empty gesture<sup>150</sup>. By the end of the war, casualties suffered by the Japanese merchant marine exceeded one hundred thousand men of all ranks<sup>151</sup>.

<sup>146</sup> Individual sailings were two-and-a-half times more likely to be sunk according to Winton (Op. Cit. p 318).

<sup>147</sup> Mark P. Parillo. *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 73.

<sup>148</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997, p 415. Night-fighting was a skill for which the Imperial Navy had equipped and trained with exceptional diligence.

<sup>149</sup> Clay Blair, *Silent Victory: The U.S. Submarine War Against Japan*, J.B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia and New York, 1975, p 18.

<sup>150</sup> Mark P. Parillo. *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 71.

<sup>151</sup> John Winton, *Convoy: The Defence of Sea Trade 1890-1990*, Michael Joseph, 1983, p 319.



In summary, the poor organisation and neglect that characterised the Japanese maritime commerce protection effort had several underlying causes. Most important of all was the unshakeable belief of the Navy that the centre of gravity of both forces lay with the main battle fleet. Had Japan moved to implement a rearguard strategy to protect merchant shipping after Midway then the US submarine offensive would have enjoyed something less than free rein, and might have been substantially impeded. The Navy's failure to at least accord better protection to oil imports was indeed short-sighted, for a shortage of oil became the single most important constraint on naval operations after 1943<sup>152</sup>. Strategy aside, rivalry among the institutions of the Japanese state would have taken its toll on efficiency, working against centralised control at all levels of the war effort. A shortage of fiscal resources before the war also imposed practical limits on the size of any escort force, since most of the naval budget was required to keep up first-line battle fleet strength vis-à-vis the United States Navy. As Colin Gray writes, "Strategic flexibility flows not only from sound doctrine and an open but educated mind but also from numbers; and inflexibility flows from the absence of numbers"<sup>153</sup>. Systemic weaknesses aside, Japan's woeful shipping protection effort was in the end a product of the Navy's indifference, which persisted even when confronted with the evidence of ship losses and the bankruptcy of the prewar strategy. Given the disparity in resources Japan could never have hoped to win a prolonged conflict against the United States. But the Navy need not have given up the merchant fleet as cheaply as it did.

### **Conclusion.**

Modernisation from the 1860s onwards locked Japan into dependence on sea transportation, underpinning the health of its economy and underwriting its war-making ability. Japan's dependence on overseas resources, especially oil, was as important contributing factor behind its decision to go to war with Great Britain and the United States in 1941. That this same dependence had transformed an undefended merchant marine into a strategic liability was not grasped by the naval high command, so intent was it on winning a quick victory over the US Pacific Fleet. The Imperial Navy developed its strategy and tactics out of limited wars fought at the turn of the century in which its major roles were to protect the

---

<sup>152</sup> Robert Goralski and Russell W. Freeburg, *Oil & War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in WWII Meant Victory or Defeat*, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, 1987, pp 189-190, 315-16.

short communication lines to China and Korea, and to directly challenge opposing navies for sea control. Neither the defence of merchant shipping nor the long-term security of the industrial base were essential to victory in 1895, 1905 or 1918. When the Navy tried to scale up its strategy for local war to the vast expanses of the Pacific and Indian Oceans and the total war of 1941-45, it was totally inadequate. Nevertheless, too many resources and too much pride had been invested in the Navy's 'battle faith' to be swiftly redirected into strategies for protecting maritime transportation. Once the United States had organised itself for a concerted attack on Japanese shipping, led by its submarine forces, the War of the *Maru* exposed the full extent of Japan's vulnerability to blockade. Efforts to protect merchant shipping in the form of dedicated escort forces and organised convoys arrived too little, too late. In spite of this, what little was done to organise convoys greatly improved the survivability of Japanese merchant ships.

For most Japanese, the blockade ranks together with the atomic and incendiary bombing of its cities as the greatest hardships visited on Japan during the Second World War. After the war, the former Minister of Munitions, Toyoda Teijiro, stated in his interrogation that "the shipping shortage and the scarcity of oil were the two main factors that assumed utmost importance in Japan's war efforts"<sup>154</sup>. Official testimony before the Diet was more clear-cut, acknowledging that "the greatest cause of our defeat was the loss of shipping"<sup>155</sup>.

Since 1945, Japan has had no overseas territory or bases to defend and control of sea lanes on which Japan's economic security depends has been in large part the responsibility of the United States Navy. The War of the *Maru* however continued to cast a long shadow, shaping Japan's post-war perceptions of vulnerability and bearing upon the roles and missions of the MSDF and the emphasis placed upon the security of sea lines of communications and escort operations.

---

<sup>153</sup> Colin S. Gray, *The Leverage of Sea Power: The Strategic Advantages of Navies in War*, The Free Press, New York, 1992, p 21.

<sup>154</sup> Quoted in Mark P. Parillo, *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993, p 46.

<sup>155</sup> D.W. Waters, *The Naval Review*, Vol. 76, No. 3, July 1988, p 246-47.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Japan's Sea Lane Security in the Era of Defence Constraints, 1945-77

#### Introduction.

This chapter analyses the extent to which the perceived vulnerability of sea lines of communication influenced the policies of post-war Japanese governments and other security actors in Japan from 1945-77; the era in which Japan recovered its sovereignty and established itself as an economic superpower without acquiring a concomitant military status. Japan's post-war security is normally seen in terms of the discontinuities with the pre-war status quo, as empire and militarism gave way to the peaceful expansion of trade within a security framework based on defence linkages with the United States and a system of constitutional and other constraints that strictly regulated the Self Defense Forces (SDF) from their formation in 1954. In the context of these changes, this chapter addresses two basic questions that are carried forward into subsequent chapters. First, to what extent did security concerns about Japan's sea lanes dispose post-war governments towards forming an alliance with the United States and acquiring independent defence capability? Second, given the domestic and international controversy surrounding rearmament, to what extent were "sea lane defence" and the "safety of maritime transportation" used as rationales to legitimise the creation, existence and force structure of the SDF and the Maritime Self Defense Forces (MSDF) in particular?

A framework is presented for analysing Japan's post-war defence and security at the levels of international systemic interaction, transnational alliance linkages, and domestic politics. This is followed by an examination of the 'Yoshida Doctrine', which served as the *de facto* blueprint for Japan's security and diplomacy during the Cold War. In the section entitled Naval Renaissance, the complex and clandestine process which led to the MSDF's establishment is profiled and contrasted with greater official resistance towards the creation of ground forces. Naval links with the United States and institutional continuity maintained from the Imperial Navy are also identified as key influences on the MSDF's structures and thinking. Planning for the protection of maritime transportation and the build-up of MSDF capabilities is then charted up to the late 1960s. Two competing visions for the MSDF are explored: Sekino Hideo's vision of a great power navy dedicated to defending sea lines of communication, versus Kaihara Osamu's model for a limited anti-invasion force. In this context, a short-lived

official attempt around 1970 to implement Sekino's 'autonomous' vision is profiled against the ascendancy of defence constraints, which were formalised with the adoption of the National Defense Programme Outline (*taikō*) in 1976. Perceptions of a growing Soviet threat to Japan's sea lanes as far as 1977 are then evaluated, as a prelude to Chapter 5 which deals with the rise of sea lane defence to the forefront of Japan's defence and alliance policies in the 1980s.

### **I. Analytical framework for Japan's post-war security policy.**

Japan's post-war defence and security policy-making environment is most profitably described at three levels of analysis: systemic, transnational and domestic. Two key documents set the foundations for post-war security: the November 1946 Constitution (*kenpō*) and the 1951 Security Treaty between Japan and the United States (*nichibei anzen hoshō jōyaku*, often shortened to *ampō*), revised in 1960.

At an international systemic level, from 1945 onwards, Japan's external environment was defined initially by disarmament, occupation and the redrawing of its borders to the four main islands of Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu. Thereafter, it was recast in the global, bipolar schism of the Cold War and the corresponding division of Asia into Communist and Western-backed blocs. At the same time, the legacy of Japan's military expansion in the Pacific War also continued to define Japan's relations with Asian countries in particular. While the dissolution of Japan's empire (formally secured with the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty) removed any strategic requirement for Japan to maintain military lines of communication with overseas bases, the expansion of its industrial base after 1950 greatly increased its dependence on sea lines of communication (SLOC) for imports of raw materials, energy and food (see Chapter One), while indirect strategic dependence remained on US military SLOC for the re-supply and reinforcement of US forces in Japan and Korea.

At a transnational level, Japan's post-war political and strategic orientation was to a large extent a 'default' position determined by the United States' role as the occupying power. Reflecting a contradiction between the initial US objective of demilitarising Japan and Washington's subsequent drive to co-opt it as a military partner in the Cold War, Japan's post-war security linkages with the United States have acted both as a constraint and driver of Japanese rearmament. On one hand, the 1951 US-Japan Security Treaty gave Japan a *de facto* defence guarantee (made *de jure* in 1960), bringing it into the Western camp and obviating, in the perception of its post-war



political leaders, any strategic requirement to deal with external security threats independently. On the other hand, transnational links pushed “questions of military security higher up on the political agenda than would have been possible in light of the organisation of the Japanese government and of Japan’s civil-military relations”<sup>1</sup>.

In an external security context dominated by linkages with the United States, Japan’s post-war domestic defence ‘debate’ was framed between the outright opposition of left-wing parties towards rearmament and alliance with the United States, and conservative-nationalist forces on the right which favoured a more independent approach to defence and less strategic reliance on the United States. As Katzenstein and Okawara (1993) have argued, questions of military security (in contrast to questions of economic security) were deeply contested in post-war Japan, centering on the legitimacy of the SDF and their potential to be employed in an internal as well as external security role<sup>2</sup>. At the level of society, pre-war popular esteem for the military was replaced by a widespread suspicion of military institutions while SDF members were held in low social esteem. After the establishment of the SDF in July 1954, their constitutionality was subject to repeated legal challenges (and upheld by the Sapporo District Court in 1973). Between these poles, post-war governments basically followed the compromise course of limited rearmament set by Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru, who formed five administrations between 1946 and 1954. The November 1946 Constitution promulgated under Yoshida, though not preventing the establishment of the SDF in 1954, has served as the primary legal and moral reference point for successive political and normative constraints on the acquisition and use of military power by the Japanese state. Chapter II (‘Renunciation of War’), Article 9, of the Constitution states:

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognised<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Peter Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara, *Japan’s National Security: Structures, Norms and Policy Responses in a Changing World*, Cornell East Asia Series, Ithaca, N.Y., 1993, p 99.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp 7-8.

<sup>3</sup> J.A.A. Stockwin, *Governing Japan*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1999, p 46.

Although the 1951 Security Treaty was revised in 1960 and Article 9 of the 1946 Constitution has been subject to substantial 'reinterpretation', these documents have served as the twin foundations of Japan's security policy since 1945 and symbolise the major departures from the pre-war status quo.

## **II. The Yoshida Doctrine.**

In the late 1940s, Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru faced the overlapping challenges of reconstructing Japan's shattered economy and rebuilding Japan's international reputation while still under foreign occupation. In this environment, all short-term policy imperatives pointed away from rearmament as an issue certain to be domestically divisive, internationally contentious and economically burdensome. Yoshida responded to this predicament by adopting a pragmatic national posture "unconnected with any considerations of ideology" based on the pursuit of trade-led economic growth as the foundation of domestic stability and a minimalist political and military footprint overseas, based on political and military alignment with the United States<sup>4</sup>. The 'Yoshida Doctrine', which set the blueprint for Japan's foreign, defence and economic policies during the Cold War was intended more as a temporary expedient until such time as Japan could resume full responsibility for its defence and security rather than a blueprint for post-war grand strategy<sup>5</sup>.

The Yoshida Doctrine, in essence, recognised the enormous power disparities between occupier and occupied, anticipated the emerging Cold War and charted a tactical course for Japan designed to minimise its political exposure while maximising its economic benefits, via commercial access to the non-Communist bloc. One of the prices of this arrangement was denial of commercial access to China after 1949. As late as 1951, during the Korean War, Yoshida had still hoped to restore diplomatic and economic links with China, which had served as Japan's 'traditional' export market and supply base on the Asian Continent<sup>6</sup>. He also believed that maintaining economic relations with the fledgling People's Republic would induce China's Communist leaders to be independent of the Soviet Union and would later brand US containment policies based

---

<sup>4</sup>Yoshida quoted in Murata Koji, 'The US-Japan Alliance and the US-Korean Alliance: Their Origins, Dilemmas and Structures', *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 14, 1995, p 187.

<sup>5</sup> Kenneth Pyle, *The Japanese Question: Power and Purpose in a New Era*, The AEI Press, Washington, D.C., 1996, p 26.

<sup>6</sup> John W. Dower, *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878-1954*, Harvard East Asian Studies Monographs, 1979, pp 401-403, 413.



on a monolithic view of Communism as “a total failure”<sup>7</sup>. However, Yoshida’s overriding interest lay in concluding a security treaty with the United States and the weakness of his position forced him to defer to US strategy.

Given increasing Japanese doubts about the capacity of the United Nations to function as a global institution for collective security, Yoshida appreciated that a security alignment with the United States brought with it a guarantee of access to an international trading system<sup>8</sup>. Within such a system Japan could secure the in-flows of natural resources needed to trade its way to prosperity, based on a highly regulated home market and the creation of a world-class export sector. This prompted one of two structural shifts in the international political economy of Japan’s trade. First, Southeast Asia took China’s place as a substitute source of raw materials and export demand<sup>9</sup>. Second, new oil finds in the Gulf region led the Middle East to become Japan’s primary source of oil, replacing its pre-war dependence on North America. Thus, Japan’s entry into a Western-led trading system led the sea route connecting Japan to the Gulf, via Southeast Asia, to assume central importance to its economic well-being. Sea lanes linking Japan to Australia also became essential to imports of minerals and food, while maritime access across the Pacific served both as an inward conduit for minerals and food as well as for exports bound in the opposite direction. Yoshida felt “that Japan should and could live as a maritime nation and that cooperation with (the United States) would be the best way to acquire access to the world market and its resources and to safeguard her sea routes”<sup>10</sup>. By submerging Japan’s political and strategic interests within *Pax Americana*, Yoshida, at the political cost of diminished sovereignty, paved the way for four decades of prosperity and the expansion of GDP between 1950 and 1990 by a factor of 152.

The Yoshida administration proposed a cooperative security arrangement with the United States as early as 1947, offering basing facilities to US forces in return for the conclusion of a peace treaty and a US defence commitment to Japan<sup>11</sup>. Anticipating the emergence of rival US- and Soviet-led camps in East Asia three years before the Korean

<sup>7</sup> Soeya Yoshihide, in Muttiah Alagappa (ed.), *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences*, Stanford University Press, California, 1998, p 203.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Weinstein, *Japan’s Postwar Defence Policy*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1971, pp 19-20.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Stubbs, ‘US-Japanese Trade Relations: the ASEAN Dimension’, *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1992.

<sup>10</sup> Kosaka Masataka, ‘Japan’s Major Interests and Policies in Asia and the Pacific’, *Orbis*, Vol. 24, No. 3, Fall 1975, pp 793-808.

War, Yoshida believed that the presence of US forces in Japan would provide an adequate deterrent against direct Soviet aggression<sup>12</sup>. Yoshida believed that reciprocity in the security arrangements could be offered by conceding to the United States a liberal basing agreement that would turn Japan into a strategic, logistical and intelligence-gathering hub underpinning US military strategy in the Western Pacific. While an exclusively non-military contribution to regional stability would avoid aggravating regional sensitivities, Japan could contribute to international security as an economic force for stability and a developmental model for decolonising nations in Asia and beyond. This broad conception of a bilateral security arrangement was reflected in the title of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security Between Japan and the United States. References to the treaty as an 'alliance' (*dōmei*) remained taboo within Japan into the 1980s.

Although US attitudes towards Japanese rearmament were already softening with the onset of the Cold War and the Communist victory in China, it was the outbreak of the Korean War, in June 1950, that brought about a reversal in US policy towards Japan. Two weeks into the conflict, on July 8, General MacArthur sanctioned the creation of a National Police Reserve Force (NPRF) of 75,000 men, reflecting his concerns about an internal security vacuum arising from the deployment of three US divisions from Japan to South Korea. During negotiations to conclude a security treaty, held in January 1951, Special Ambassador John Foster Dulles pressed Yoshida to transform the NPRF into an army of 350,000 capable of dealing with an external attack from the Soviet Union<sup>13</sup>. Yoshida, on the other hand, regarded the risk of Soviet invasion as minimal and placed at least equal weight on internal threats to national security in the form of economic sabotage or insurrection. Together with a vague offer to establish domestically recruited armed forces numbering 50,000, Yoshida reiterated the offer of bases to support the UN military effort under way in Korea, maintaining that a large-scale military build-up was both beyond the nation's means and strategically unnecessary as long as the United States maintained a military presence in Japan to ensure deterrence.

When the Security Treaty was signed on September 8, 1951 -- concurrently with the San Francisco Peace Treaty -- the stationing of US forces in Japan was guaranteed

<sup>11</sup> Martin Weinstein in James H. Buck (ed.) *The Modern Japanese Military System*, Sage publications, Beverly Hills, California, 1975, p 42.

<sup>12</sup> Kosaka Masataka, 'Japan's Major Interests and Policies in Asia and the Pacific', *Orbis*, Vol. 24, No. 3, Fall 1975, p 794.

<sup>13</sup> Reinhard Drifte, *The Security Factor in Japan's Foreign Policy, 1945-1952*, Saltire Press, Ripe, 1983, p 111.



beyond the end of Occupation, ensuring a *de facto* security guarantee even though there was no formal commitment to defend Japan in the Treaty text<sup>14</sup>. However, the shift in US policy in favour of Japanese rearmament was apparent in the Preamble to the Treaty, which stated that the United States would continue to station forces in and around Japan in the expectation that Japan “will itself increasingly assume responsibility for its own defence against direct and indirect aggression”, while avoiding “any armament which could be an offensive threat”<sup>15</sup>.

With the conclusion of the Security Treaty the Japanese government thus committed itself to a policy of limited rearmament as the price of securing US military protection and a reduction in US troops in Japan, who still numbered more than 200,000. However, basic differences between the two countries over the size and function that an ‘indigenous’ armed force would assume were still unresolved. As far as Yoshida was concerned the primary mission of Japan’s paramilitary forces was “to preserve a satisfactory relationship with the United States”<sup>16</sup>. However, in September 1952 he assented to the formation of self defence forces and agreed to include defence against external aggression as one of their basic missions.

Both governments still had to agree on manpower totals before the SDF could be inaugurated and begin drawing on US surplus equipment stocks. The NPRF and Maritime Safety Force (which MacArthur had increased by 8,000 men at the same time the NPRF was formed) were first merged under the National Safety Agency, emerging as the 110,000-man National Safety Force in October 1952. A Security Advisory Group was formed to draw up manpower targets. Subsequently, at talks held between Foreign Minister Ikeda and Secretary of State Robertson the following October, a compromise figure of 180,000 was settled upon, clearing the way for military aid to flow via the Mutual Security Act, promulgated on March 8, 1954. After the necessary legal foundation was put into place through the Defense Agency Establishment Law and Self Defense Forces Law, the SDF were formally inaugurated on July 1, numbering approximately 146,000 men.

<sup>14</sup> Both Treaties came into effect on April 28, 1952, when the Occupation formally ended.

<sup>15</sup> Under the 1951 Security Treaty US Forces retained an internal security function within their remit. When the Treaty was revised in 1960 this provision was removed.

<sup>16</sup> Kenneth Pyle, *The Japanese Question: Power and Purpose in a New Era*, The AEI Press, Washington, D.C., 1996, p 29.



The constitutionality of the SDF was based on the government's interpretation of Article 9. The Renunciation of War clause closely bore the hallmark of US influence in its drafting. MacArthur's February 1946 draft of Article 9 was worded to reflect the immediate post-war aim of demilitarising Japan in perpetuity, stating:

War as a sovereign right of the nation is abolished. Japan renounces it as an instrumentality for settling its disputes and even for preserving its own security. It relies upon the higher ideals which are now stirring the world for its defence and protection.

No Japanese Army, Navy or Air Force will ever be authorised and no rights of belligerency will ever be conferred upon any Japanese force.

Scope for interpreting the final version of Article 9 adopted by the Diet to allow the establishment of the Self Defense Forces (SDF) was facilitated by insertion of the clause, "In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph," at the beginning of the second paragraph. This crucial re-wording was at the initiative of Foreign Minister (later prime minister) Ashida Hitoshi, during Diet deliberations prior to the Constitution's promulgation<sup>17</sup>. Without this addition, "Japan would have been barred from possessing all types of armed forces"<sup>18</sup>. The provision in Article 66 of the Constitution that "The Prime Minister and other Ministers of states must be civilians" -- intended to distance the new Constitution from the Meiji Constitution, which had guaranteed a political role for the Imperial Army and Navy -- also implied that the existence of military forces was legally recognised.

In the immediate post-Occupation period, Yoshida's administration and the ruling Liberal Party found itself under attack over its approach to defence policy from both the Socialist and Communist opposition parties, who were implacably opposed to rearmament and alliance with the United States, and from the conservative nationalist Progressive party, led by Ashida Hitoshi and Shigemitsu Mamoru, who sought to amend the Constitution to facilitate a more independent approach to defence. Reflecting the domestic controversy generated by rearmament, the institutional capacity of the defence establishment continued to lag behind efforts to boost frontline capabilities. The National Defense Council (NDC), for example, did not materialise until July 1956, two

<sup>17</sup> J.A.A. Stockwin, *Governing Japan*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1999, pp 166-68. The original version of Article 9 was drafted by Colonel Charles Kades, MacArthur's head of the Government Section.



years after it was announced. Still felt to be missing, fundamentally, was a legal framework tying defence policy into the Constitution. This gap was filled with the announcement of the Basic Policy for National Defence on May 20, 1957<sup>19</sup>. With the Basic Policy in place, the way was finally open for a more coherent approach to defence planning through a series of four-year defence build-up plans, though at a pace gradual enough to minimise controversy and the diversion of resources from economic recovery. A further attempt was made to amend the Constitution, by the Democratic Party-led cabinet of Hatoyama Ichiro, in December 1954<sup>20</sup>. However, after the merger of conservative parties into the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) the following year, inaugurating the '1955 System' under which LDP governments would rule uninterrupted until 1993, an institutional and political course was charted under which successive administrations would basically adhere to the Yoshida Doctrine. With the exception of Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke, who briefly contemplated a policy of independent rearmament in 1957, LDP premiers throughout the Cold War adhered to Yoshida's policy of incremental expansion of the SDF, alongside the introduction of formal and informal constraints on defence capability in order to appease left-wing opposition. Bans were introduced against the overseas dispatch of the SDF (1954) and restrictions on arms exports were codified into three principles in 1967. Three other 'basic policies' adopted since 1957 have also constrained the SDF's evolution:

- An Exclusively Defense-Oriented Policy; which sanctions the use of force by the SDF only in response to an attack already initiated and limits the level of defence capability to the minimum required for self-defence.
- A policy of "not becoming a military power that might pose a threat to other countries", which has been taken as a prohibition against acquiring "offensive" weapons systems.

---

<sup>18</sup> Satō Seizaburo, 'Clarifying the Right of Collective Self-Defense', *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 3 No. 2, Fall/Winter 1996, p 95.

<sup>19</sup> The Basic Policy is based on four principles:

- 1) To support the activities of the United Nations and promote international cooperation, thereby contributing to the realisation of world peace;
- 2) To promote the public welfare and enhance the people's love for their country, thereby establishing the sound basis essential to Japan's security;
- 3) To develop incrementally the effective defence capabilities necessary for self-defence, in accordance with the nation's resources and the prevailing domestic situation;
- 4) To deal with external aggression on the basis of the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements, pending the effective capability of the United Nations in the future to deter and repel such aggression.

(*Defense of Japan 2000*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, p 246).

<sup>20</sup> Michael J. Green, *Arming Japan: Defense Production, Alliance Politics and the Postwar Search for Autonomy*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1995, p 42.

- The Three Non-Nuclear Principles, which since 1967 have proscribed the possession, production, and handling of nuclear weapons on Japanese territory.

Although the Japan Defense Agency (JDA) itself admits there is no clear definition of what constitutes “military power” and the military relevance of a semantic division drawn between offensive and defensive weapons systems is questionable, these policies have nonetheless constrained weapons acquisitions choices, excluding ballistic missiles, bombers, large aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines and -- until recently -- in-flight refuelling<sup>21</sup>.

Without the presence of US forces in northern Japan or Korea, it is likely that a perceived ‘threat from the north’, based on the Soviet seizure of the four Japanese-held islands in the southern Kuriles/Northern Territories in August and September 1945, combined with Stalin’s support for the North Korean invasion of South Korea in 1950, would have led Japan’s civilian leadership to reconsider a defence build-up as a matter of national survival. Historically, since the nineteenth century the Korean Peninsula has been perceived emotively by Japanese strategists as a “dagger pointed at Japan’s heart”. The continuity of such strategic concerns well into the post-1945 period is apparent in the view of relatively moderate commentators such as Kosaka Masataka, that “if the Korean peninsula were to fall into the hands of hostile powers there would be a serious and immediate threat to Japan, and control of nearby air space and sea lanes”<sup>22</sup>. However, as long as the United States was committed to the forward defence of Japan in Korea and deployed ‘tripwire’ forces in Hokkaido, the main function of the Ground Self Defense Force (GSDF) as far as Yoshida was concerned would continue to be the political one of raising contributory forces to maintain the diplomatic framework of the US-Japan Security Arrangements rather than any strategic role beyond Japan’s post-1945 borders.

Compared with the dynamics of land-based power in Northeast Asia, Japan’s post-1945 maritime strategic environment was more fully transformed by Japan’s alliance with the United States, in effect inverting the strategic polarity of the Pacific, transforming it from Japan’s maritime frontline (as had been the case from 1905-45) to the equivalent

<sup>21</sup> *Defense of Japan 1995*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, p 63.

<sup>22</sup> Kosaka Masataka, ‘Japan’s Major Interests and Policies in Asia and the Pacific’, *Orbis*, Vol. 24, No. 3, Fall 1975, p 798.



of a rear area connecting it commercially with its major export and import markets in North America and Southeast Asia, and militarily linking US forward bases in Japan and elsewhere in East Asia, with Hawaii and the US West Coast<sup>23</sup>. Moreover, Communist states on Asia's maritime periphery possessed only limited maritime capabilities during the 1950s, neither able nor willing to challenge US naval and air superiority over water, with the partial exception of the Taiwan Strait. In this benign maritime environment, as noted in Chapter Two, the importance of military SLOC to US strategy tended to be obscured, given the overwhelming dominance of the US Navy. However, an awareness of the naval dimension to the US security guarantee was keenly perceived both by Japan's post-war leaders and former Imperial Navy officers, many of whom staffed the Maritime Self Defense Force itself or moved into positions of importance in politics, or became businessmen "worried about the security of Japan's trade routes"<sup>24</sup>. Compared with ASDF or GSDF generals, former MSDF officers would continue to have a much higher representation within industry into the 1970s<sup>25</sup>.

From this perceptive, the underlying purpose of the Security Treaty was "to secure Japan's lines of supply in the Pacific and Indian Oceans and to permit it access to export markets, particularly those in the United States"<sup>26</sup>. However, Article V of the revised 1960 US-Japan Security Treaty only obliges the United States to respond to "an armed attack against either Party in the *territories* under the administrations of Japan"<sup>27</sup>. The argument that Article V of the Treaty, "does not impose any responsibility on U.S. military forces" to respond to "attacks against Japanese merchant shipping on the high seas" would later be used by proponents of an expanded Japanese navy and an 'autonomous' defence posture in the late 1960s<sup>28</sup>.

Japan's dependence on the US Seventh Fleet for security in the sea areas from Japan to the Gulf was recognised by Yoshida, who was sympathetic to a linkage between trade and the necessity for naval protection. This was reflected in the tacit support provided for the creation of post-war maritime forces by his administration, in contrast with the

<sup>23</sup> Oga Ryōhei, *Shiiren no Himitsu*, Shobunsha, Tokyo, 1983, p 172.

<sup>24</sup> James E. Auer, 'Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force: An Appropriate Maritime Strategy?', *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 24, No. 4, December 1971, p 12.

<sup>25</sup> Peter J Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara, *Japan's National Security: Structures, Norms and Policy Responses in a Changing World*, Cornell East Asia Series, Ithaca, N.Y., 1993, p 77.

<sup>26</sup> George Friedman and Meredith Lebard, *The Coming War with Japan*, St Martin's Press, New York, 1991, p 297.

<sup>27</sup> Treaty text quoted from *Defense of Japan 1995*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, p 241 (my emphasis).

<sup>28</sup> Sekino Hideo, 'Japan and Her Maritime Defense', *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, May 1971, Vol. 97, No. 819, p 119.

political resistance which met US demands to establish a large Japanese army. This difference of approach can be ascribed to several reasons. First, Japan's export-led economic growth was, in a physical sense, completely reliant on the expansion of a large, Japanese-flagged ocean-going merchant fleet -- set to become the second largest in the world, at 30 million tons, by the end of the 1960s -- in order to import the raw materials and fuel for industrial expansion which drove growth. The purely defensive objective of protecting Japan's commercial shipping interests thus accorded with the post-war political priority placed on economic recovery and expansion. Second, Yoshida -- who maintained close links to former Imperial Navy officers during the Occupation -- recognised that the political costs of maintaining naval forces, operating out of the glare of media publicity and away from foreign populations, would be much lower than for maintaining any Japanese troops on the ground in Asia<sup>29</sup>. Third, while the process of gradual naval rearmament was pursued with a degree of official encouragement in Tokyo, the inter-personal and institutional bonding between former Imperial Navy personnel and US Navy officers was a factor independently driving the reconstitution of Japanese maritime security forces at a transnational level. The spontaneity of rapprochement between naval veterans from both countries contrasted with SCAP's purge of Imperial Army officers<sup>30</sup>.

### **III. Naval renaissance.**

Although nearly nine years separated the inauguration of the MSDF from the disestablishment of the Imperial Navy, a virtually unbroken institutional lineage was maintained. Compared with efforts to establish ground forces, the development of a post-war navy, although clandestine, proceeded more smoothly under the "sympathetic guidance of the U.S. Navy and the strong traditions of the Imperial Japanese Navy". The strength of transnational links was reflected in the fact that the MSDF trained with and was equipped by the US Navy long before the Air Self Defense Forces (ASDF) and GSDF formed links with their corresponding US armed services. Its acquisitions were also guided towards complementing capability gaps in Seventh Fleet units based in Japan, mainly in mine-counter measures and anti-submarine warfare (ASW). At the same time, the MSDF was a direct descendant of the Imperial Navy, retaining many of its personnel, as well as its customs, traditions and institutional forms. As part of this, the MSDF also inherited the ambitions of those whose "beautiful dream" was to restore Japan's post-war navy to a fully fledged, stand-alone force whose mission would be to

---

<sup>29</sup> Reinhard Drifte, *The Security Factor in Japan's Foreign Policy, 1945-1952*, Saltire Press, Ripe, 1983, p 104.



defend Japan's sea lines of communication. Although in part due to a mixture of nostalgia for past grandeur and the empire-building tendencies common to all large bureaucracies, the dream of an 'autonomous' navy also reflected fears that a future *guerre de course* might be directed at Japan's commerce as well as doubts about the reliability of the US security commitment extending to Japan's merchant marine. The presence of Imperial Navy veterans at all key levels of the fledgling MSDF also ensured that the institutional memory of the wartime blockade was passed on<sup>31</sup>.

Although the Imperial Navy was officially abolished in November 1945, its command structures were held intact within the Second Bureau of the Demobilisation Ministry Department<sup>32</sup>. In part, this reflected an urgent need on the Allies' part to clear Japanese waters of approximately 100,000 sea mines, many of them air-dropped in the final months of the war. A sizeable Imperial Navy minesweeping capability had escaped destruction in the war and minesweeping operations conducted by its former officers and vessels, organised in a 'route clearance unit' (*kōro keibitai*), began shortly after the surrender on September 2.

In August 1947, the government responded to arguments that Japan required a coast guard to protect Japanese fishing vessels from seizure and to coordinate the minesweeping effort. The Maritime Safety Board -- later renamed the Maritime Safety Agency (MSA) -- was created with the transfer of 28 former Imperial Navy auxiliary sub-chasers from the Demobilisation Ministry. Although under the control of the Ministry of Transport, the coast guard was deliberately constituted to serve as the nucleus of a future navy<sup>33</sup>.

The difference between official attitudes towards naval and ground rearmament is demonstrated by the fact that even as Yoshida negotiated with the Occupation authorities over the size of a reconstituted army, in October 1950, 46 minesweepers from the *kōro keibitai*, now under MSA command, were hastily assembled and ordered to assist in mine clearance operations in support of US amphibious operations in Wonsan Bay, Korea. During operations, one Japanese vessel sank, eight personnel were

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p 103.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Captain Otsuka Umio, MSDF, Agenda Coordinator, Western Pacific Naval Symposium, Plans and Program Division, Maritime Staff Office, Japan Defense Agency, Tokyo, March 1, 2002.

<sup>32</sup> James E. Auer, *The Postwar Rearmament of Japanese Maritime Forces, 1945-71*, Praeger, New York, 1973, pp 49-52.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. pp 63-64.

wounded and one killed<sup>34</sup>. Subsequently, Admiral Arleigh Burke together with a circle of ex-Imperial Navy officers led by Admiral Nomura Kichisaburo (who would later embark on a political career in the Diet) jointly developed plans for Japan's maritime forces that, in addition to performing peacetime constabulary and coast guard functions, would include a role "in the defense of her own country and in defense of the high seas surrounding the Japanese archipelago". In April 1951, Burke wrote:

"I personally believe that the solution to this quandary lies in the formation of a small group of United States Naval Officers to study, plan, and direct the initiation of a small Japanese Navy. This Japanese Navy need not be called a Navy. It can be called a Coast Guard or anything else. ... I should think it might be desirable to augment this group ... with about ten Japanese ex-naval officers. This contingent would become the nucleus of the Japanese Navy Department"<sup>35</sup>.

The United States planned initially to create "a small seagoing force" of sonar-equipped anti-submarine patrol ships in the event of a conflict with the Soviet Union. Admiral Nomura and other senior ex-Imperial Navy officers won the backing of Yoshida as well as future prime minister, Hatoyama Ichiro, for the necessity of rebuilding a Japanese Navy<sup>36</sup>. Although the Nomura group received a cold reception from Yoshida and Dulles for its plan to reconstitute a navy composed of 337 vessels, totalling 300,000 tons and 750 aircraft, their lobbying efforts within the US Navy and Japan's civil authorities won backing for the creation of the Maritime Guard Force (*kaijō keibitai*) as an autonomous unit within the MSA<sup>37</sup>. In April 1952, the Maritime Guard Force was established before being succeeded by the Coastal Safety Force in August. Neither unit possessed operational capabilities beyond minesweeping, but in organisational terms they were naval in all but name and mostly staffed by former Imperial Navy officers and sailors. The NPRF and Coastal Safety Force were merged under the National Safety Agency, emerging as the 110,000-man National Safety Force and the Maritime Safety Force in August 1952. The National Safety Agency was placed under the direction of the Prime Minister's Office (*kantei*).

To equip the *de facto* navy, agreement was reached with the United States to charter surplus US vessels in November 1952, resulting in the transfer of six frigates and three

<sup>34</sup> Taoka Shunji, 'Possible Involvement in Mine Sweeping and Danger of Handling Over Carte Blanche -- Pitfalls of US-Japan Guidelines', *Aera*, June 23, 1997, pp 27-28. FBIS-EAS-97-119, June 23, 1997.

<sup>35</sup> James E. Auer, *The Postwar Rearmament of Japanese Maritime Forces, 1945-71*, Praeger, New York, 1973, p 80.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. p 72.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. p 82.



landing ships in January 1953. A further Naval Vessel Loan Agreement was concluded in May 1954, paving the way for the loan of 159 ships, worth \$80 million, including destroyers, support vessels and a single submarine<sup>38</sup>. The United States continued to supply one-third of MSDF tonnage and aircraft until 1967, when the military aid programme to Japan was terminated.

#### **IV. Protection of maritime transport up to the Fourth Defense Build-up Plan.**

Post-war Japanese proposals for a naval role in protecting shipping, in the form of convoys over the high seas, date back to 1952. In August, the *seido chōsa iinkai* (Systems Investigative Committee), was established as a supra-ministerial body designed to aid in the drafting of government policy. It incorporated a defence sub-committee responsible for drafting armed forces requirements for Japan, based on its analysis of global conditions and the Security Treaty. The newly formed Maritime Safety Force contributed its assessment, based on a long-range maritime force estimate drawn up by uniformed officials within the Maritime Safety Agency. The sub-committee recommended that Japan would require naval forces totalling 475,000 tons. It was envisaged that this very substantial force would be constructed with the help of US military aid over a 13-year period, involving government expenditures of 8 trillion yen. The subcommittee concluded that maintaining “supply lanes on the seas” was one of the core objectives of national defence. To this end, the acquisition of “maritime defence potential” would serve the “primary objective of maritime convoying and anti-submarine warfare”. Specifically, the plan recommended that:

Convoys along coastal and territorial waters will be conducted in full, while one-third convoys on the high-sea are conducted<sup>39</sup>.

This proposal was the first official attempt to factor the security dimensions of Japan’s rising economic dependence on imports into post-war military planning. The *seido chōsa iinkai* sub-committee estimated that funding for the plan would require up to 8 per cent of the government’s annual expenditure to complete. The plan met with active opposition from the Ministry of Finance (MoF) in the austere conditions of the immediate post-Occupation period<sup>40</sup>. Such was the stringent supervision of the MoF over the JDA’s budgetary claims (including via its personnel seconded to the Agency)

---

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. pp 94-95.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. p 154.

that 'civilian control' has been seen as synonymous with MoF control<sup>41</sup>. After 1955, more modest acquisition targets for the MSDF were proposed, with force estimates ranging from 81,000 to 143,000 tons. However, the government was not able to embark on any long-range defence plan until the Basic Policy for National Defense was passed in May 1957. On June 14, Prime Minister Kishi Nobusuke's cabinet embarked on the first of four four-year defence build-up plans (*bōei seibi keikaku*).

Intended to span five years but shortened to three, the First Defense Build-up Plan (1958-60) was concerned with building up the core capability of the Self Defense Forces. The tonnage of the MSDF was set at 124,000 tons. The Second Defense Build-up Plan (1962-66) ventured further, committing Japan to build up defence forces "able to cope effectively with an aggression at or lower than (the level of) a local war, using conventional weapons". The MSDF fleet was expanded to 140,000 tons to increase its ASW capabilities, although its logistical base remained under-developed. The Third Defense Build-up Plan outlined as a further objective for the MSDF, "increasing the ability to defend coastal areas, straits and surrounding waters". The National Defense Council approved the following additions to the MSDF inventory: 56 vessels of all types amounting to 48,000 tons; 14 destroyers, including Japan's first surface-to-air missile (SAM) and helicopter-equipped models, five submarines as well as 60 fixed-wing ASW patrol aircraft and 33 ASW helicopters<sup>42</sup>.

For the first time, under the Third Defense Build-up Plan the "protection of maritime transportation" (*kaijō kōtsū no hōgo*) was officially added to Japan's defence responsibilities<sup>43</sup>. Specifically, the Third Defense Build-up Plan detailed emergency plans to establish two sea 'route zones' (*kōrotai*) to the southwest and southeast of Japan's major Pacific ports. The southwestern route (*nansei kōrotai*) was defined as 150 nautical miles (nm) wide and 840 nm long, extending from Osaka along the axis of the Ryūkyū Islands/Nansei Shotō to the Bashi Channel, between Taiwan and the Philippines. A second, southeastern route zone (*nantō kōrotai*), 240 nm wide, extended 1,000 nm from Tokyo along the axis of the Ogasawara/Bonin Islands to a point north of

<sup>40</sup> During fiscal years 1955-57, defence expenditure averaged 13.3 per cent of government general account outlays. After falling steadily, by fiscal 1977, defence accounted for just under 6 per cent of government expenditure. (Defense of Japan, 1977, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, p 166).

<sup>41</sup> Javed S. Maswood, *Japanese Defence: the Search for Political Power*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Allen and Unwin, 1990, p 31.

<sup>42</sup> James E. Auer, *The Postwar Rearmament of Japanese Maritime Forces, 1945-71*, Praeger, New York, 1973, p 159.



Guam. Both 'route zones' extended approximately to the 20<sup>th</sup> Parallel. At this time, these island chains were still under US administration: the Ogasawara Islands were transferred to Japanese sovereignty in 1968; the Bonin Islands/Kazan Retto in 1971; and the Ryūkyū Islands in 1972.

In testimony to the Special Committee for Okinawa and the Northern Territories, on November 30, 1970, the chief bureaucrat at the JDA, Kubo Takuya, who was to play an important role in the development of defence policy during the 1970s, became the first official to announce the geographical scope of the MSDF's sea lane defence concept in the Diet, stating that "the Southeast route extends in a corridor about 100 miles wide from Tokyo Bay in the direction of Saipan for 1,000 miles. The southwest route goes through Osaka and Kyushu to the end of the Ryūkyū island chain in a corridor also about 100 miles wide whose exact length slips my mind at the moment, but is also nearly 1,000 miles"<sup>44</sup>.

During the 1960s, MSDF staff officers conducted a war game to determine escort requirements for convoy operations between Japan and the Philippines and Guam. It was estimated that to maintain daily import requirements of 150,000 tons, a convoy of 60 ships would have to arrive every three days, requiring a total of 54 destroyer escorts. However, even assuming the entire surface fleet could be put to convoy duties in wartime, the MSDF possessed only 38 destroyers by the end of the Third Defense Build-up Plan, in 1971. Auer's contemporary judgement was that "if Japan's naval forces have been built up to protect its ocean-going merchant shipping, it could be considered that its relative progress has been negative"<sup>45</sup>.

Despite the fact that past US, British and Japanese attempts to implement a concept of patrolled sea lanes had proved disastrous in wartime compared with convoy (as noted in chapters Two and Three), MSDF plans for the protection of shipping embraced such a concept in response to the growing gulf between the MSDF's limited escort resources and Japan's rapidly expanding merchant fleet<sup>46</sup>.

---

<sup>43</sup> *Waga Kuni ni okeru Bōeiryoku Seibi no Keika*, ('Trends in Japan's defence equipment build-up'), 1982, p 45. This report was commissioned internally within the JDA as an account of history of postwar defence planning.

<sup>44</sup> Cited in Maeda Tetsuo, *The Hidden Army: the Untold Story of Japan's Military Forces*, Edition Q Inc., Chicago, 1995, p 231.

<sup>45</sup> James E. Auer, *The Postwar Rearmament of Japanese Maritime Forces, 1945-71*, Praeger, New York, 1973, p 165.

<sup>46</sup> Sekino Hideo, 'Japan and Her Maritime Defense', *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, May 1971, Vol. 97, No. 819, p 115.

## V. Autonomous defence and MSDF capabilities.

Between 1969 and 1971, during the Third Defense Build-up Plan, the question of an 'autonomous' or 'self-reliant' defence posture (*jishu bōei*) received consideration in Japan's defence and business circles. According to Nakasone Yasuhiro, who was JDA Director General from January 1970 to July 1971, the basic concept called for Japan, while maintaining exclusive dependence on the US nuclear umbrella, to "make the Self-Defense Force the main element in the country's conventional defence and to complement this with the Japan-U.S. mutual security system"<sup>47</sup>. Particular emphasis was laid upon the need to develop Japan's "maritime power", in the form of a major naval build-up, in which aim the JDA was backed by segments of the business community. A 'Malacca Straits defence theory' (*maraka bōeiron*) also appeared around the same time<sup>48</sup>.

During the drafting of a fourth plan to be budgeted from fiscal 1972-73, the JDA departed from the pattern of incremental build-up established under the first three defence build-up programmes to propose a major expansion of Japan's defence capabilities. 'Autonomous' defence arose in a strategic context shaped by the draw-down of US ground troops in Vietnam, from 1969 onwards, which for the first time challenged assumptions underlying the Yoshida Doctrine by raising questions about the reliability of US treaty commitments in Asia. This assertiveness from the Agency was closely associated with Nakasone's 18-month JDA directorship, an example of the importance of individual policy-makers in the formation of Japan's defence policy despite the 'faceless', consensual image often ascribed to decision-making in Japan<sup>49</sup>.

Negotiations for the reversion of Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty influenced the defence debate in several ways. In a direct sense, although US forces were to remain there, the transfer of the Ryūkyū Islands to Tokyo's control promised to extend the SDF's responsibilities for territorial defence (concerning mainly the Maritime and Air Self Defense Forces), virtually to Taiwan. At a jointly held JDA and Ministry of

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Ibid. p 111.

<sup>48</sup> Goto Moto, 'Japan in Asia', *Japan Quarterly*, October-December 1969, Vol. 26 No. 4, pp 390-391.

<sup>49</sup> The importance of individual decision-makers' contribution to Japan's post-war defence policy is one of the central contentions of Katahara Eichi's thesis, *The Politics of Japanese Defence Policy Making, 1975-1989* (Griffith University, April 1990). This applies not only to Nakasone in the 1945-77 period, but to the troika formed by Kubo Takuya, Sakata Michita and Miki Takeo who -- as is explored later in this chapter -- actively steered a moderate defence policy course in the mid-1970s, even though they were assisted in this aim by reinforcing domestic and external trends.



Foreign Affairs (MOFA) press conference in May 1969, JDA officials outlined three implications of the reversion of Okinawa for defence policy:

1. While Japan's defence posture has previously been based on a gradual consolidation of defence power and maintaining the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty in view of the internal and external situations, the growth of national power and the improvement of (Japan's) international status, defence efforts will be more positively pushed forward in the future, and defence power, capable of coping effectively and flexibly with the state of direct or indirect aggression, will be perfected.
2. Japan would assume primary responsibility for the defence of Okinawa after reversion. Regarding the maritime defence of Okinawa, Japan should acquire the necessary defence power for the patrolling of the sea areas around Okinawa, maintaining and controlling ports, *and the securing of the Nansei sea lane around Okinawa, in the same way as in the sea areas around the homeland*<sup>50</sup>.
3. For our country which is surrounded on all four sides by the sea, and which bases its existence on trade, the securing of the safety of maritime transport is an indispensable factor for the survival of our country. Further efforts will be made for the strengthening of our maritime defence power and for the improvement of defence of the straits and maritime escort".

Despite such declarations, no details were forthcoming about projected costs or equipment that the JDA intended to procure under the proposed Fourth Defense Build-up Plan until Nakasone joined the JDA. A detailed draft of the 'New Plan' or 'Nakasone Plan', so-named to advertise a departure from the gradualist pace of previous build-up plans, was released in April 1970. The plan was among several controversial moves associated with Nakasone's term as JDA Director General, including a proposal to revise the Basic Policy for National Defense to formalise a supplementary role for the alliance in Japan's defence policy<sup>51</sup>. The draft of the Nakasone Plan stipulated that the SDF should be able to deal independently with "limited, direct aggression" by securing air and sea control around Japanese territory. Reflecting the importance of maritime defence, the plan called for a doubling of the MSDF fleet from 142,000 tons to 320,000 tons within a decade. Plans to protect maritime transportation within the *nansei* and *nantō kōrotai* were linked to the planned acquisition of two 8,000-ton helicopter

<sup>50</sup> *Asahi Shimbun*, May 18, 1969, Daily Summary of the Japanese Press, US Embassy, Tokyo, May 1969 (emphasis added).

carriers, each of which would be capable of carrying six helicopters to conduct ASW patrols to the Bashi channel (between Taiwan and the Philippines) and north of Guam<sup>52</sup>. The 'Nakasone Plan' was provisionally budgeted at between 5.7 and 6.5 trillion yen, or roughly double the expenditure of the Third Defence Build-up Plan<sup>53</sup>.

Support for autonomous defence was forthcoming from the Federation of Economic Organisations (*keidanren*) which was briefed by the JDA on its plans for defending Japan's commercial shipping lanes. At its general meeting in 1969, the *keidanren* passed a resolution backing autonomous defence and a doubling of the ratio of defence spending to Gross National Product (GNP), from around 1 per cent to 2 per cent<sup>54</sup>. The support expressed by business for autonomous defence in the late 1960s was driven in large part by the growth of interest in autonomous defence production, which although accounting for just 0.5 per cent of industrial output by 1970, was disproportionately important for the development of technology through research and development<sup>55</sup>.

In addition to the commercial interest of major corporations such as Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (which then occupied a 38 per cent market share of the defence sector) in a doubling of defence expenditure, some elements within big business were sympathetic to the arguments that a long-range Japanese naval presence would reduce the vulnerability of Japanese merchant shipping and regarded a Japanese defence role in Southeast Asia as a natural extension of the development of the region as an export market and source of raw materials<sup>56</sup>. Other business lobby groups such as the *keizai dōyukai* subscribed to the linkage between Japan's import dependence and increasing the size of the MSDF, advocating a Japanese naval protection role overlapping its oil routes through the Straits of Malacca to the Indian Ocean<sup>57</sup>. Particular concern surrounded the security of the Straits of Malacca, given Japan's status as the largest user, the impending withdrawal of the Royal Navy from Singapore, an increased Soviet

<sup>51</sup> Katahara Eichi. *The Politics of Japanese Defence Policy Making, 1975-1989*, unpublished PhD thesis, Griffith University, April 1990, p 132.

<sup>52</sup> Kaihara Osamu, 'Jissai Mondai to shite Fukanō' ('Such a Mission is far beyond Japan's Power': On the Sea-Lane Defense Problem in Dispute No. 2), *Sekai no Kansen*, December 1982, p 130; and Maeda Tetsuo, *The Hidden Army: the Untold Story of Japan's Military Forces*, Edition Q Inc., Chicago, 1995, pp 230-234.

<sup>53</sup> Joseph P Keddell, *The Politics of Defense in Japan: Managing Internal and External Pressures*, M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 1994, p 48.

<sup>54</sup> 'To Strengthen Autonomous Defense; Keidanren To Decide at Its General Meeting of 23rd', *Mainichi Shimbun*, May 21, 1969, Daily Summary of the Japanese Press, May 1969.

<sup>55</sup> Michael J. Green, *Arming Japan: Defense Production, Alliance Politics and the Postwar Search for Autonomy*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1995, pp 53-59.

<sup>56</sup> Maeda Tetsuo. *The Hidden Army: the Untold Story of Japan's Military Forces*, Edition Q Inc., Chicago, 1995, p 142.

<sup>57</sup> Goto Moto, 'Japan in Asia', *Japan Quarterly*, October-December 1969, Vol. 26, No. 4, pp 390-391.



naval presence and increased assertiveness on the part of the littoral states<sup>58</sup>. (Japan's sea-lane diplomacy towards Southeast Asia is explored in Chapter Six). The President of Tokyo Electric Power, Kikawada Kazutaka, who was reportedly the inspiration behind the *maraka bōeiron*, argued that while Japan should cooperate with regional states to ensure access through the straits, an expanded MSDF should also have a role in preserving access for Japanese shipping there given the cost of diversion if the straits were closed to tankers<sup>59</sup>.

Since its formation, two camps have debated the basic role of the MSDF: those who have argued for the necessity of an ocean-going navy to protect Japan's sea lanes, against advocates of a more limited coastal anti-invasion force. Sekino Hideo and Kaihara Osamu respectively articulated these viewpoints<sup>60</sup>.

i) Sekino's SLOC defence concept.

In May 1971, Sekino Hideo, an ex-Imperial Navy officer and Commander in the MSDF (who was among those staff officers involved in the convoying exercise between Japan and the Philippines and Guam referred to above) articulated his views about Japan's strategic environment and the role of the MSDF in an essay for the US Naval Institute's *Proceedings*<sup>61</sup>. Sekino mapped out a maritime strategy for Japan in which the protection of sea communications would have priority.

Flanked by potentially hostile powers on the Asian mainland and dependent upon long lines of supply for imports critical to its survival, Sekino saw Japan's role as a Pacific sea power as a strategic necessity determined by geography and the distribution of natural resources rather than nostalgia for the "mistakes" of the pre-1945 period<sup>62</sup>. Acknowledging Japan's inability to defend itself unaided against the Soviet Union or to protect its global trading interests independently, Sekino thought that some form of alliance with the United States would be necessary "as far ahead as can be foreseen",

<sup>58</sup> Bhabani Sen Gupta, T.T. Poullose, Hemlata Bhatia, *The Malacca Straits and the Indian Ocean: A Study of the Strategic and Legal Aspects of a Controversial Sea-lane*, Macmillan, New Delhi, 1974, p 62.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. pp 42-43.

<sup>60</sup> The idea to compare and contrast Sekino and Kaihara is adapted from James Auer's *The Postwar Rearmament of Japanese Maritime Forces, 1945-71*, Praeger, New York, 1973. However, the analysis presented in this chapter also draws from original material.

<sup>61</sup> Sekino Hideo, 'Japan and Her Maritime Defense', *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, May 1971, Vol. 97, No. 819, pp 98-121.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. p 109.

while relying on diplomacy to secure commercial access to natural resources<sup>63</sup>. Against invasion, to compensate for the “unchanging geographical disadvantage of insufficient strategical width”, Japan would have to rely on the US Air Force and Seventh Fleet as “the most effective power to prevent direct aggression against Japan”<sup>64</sup>.

Regarding the security of trade routes, Sekino acknowledged the impossibility of single-handedly defending Japan’s sea lanes to the Persian Gulf and beyond. In a crisis, Japan would not be able to depend on the cooperation of oil-producing states in the Persian Gulf, nor able to guarantee the 40 per cent of its trade which passed across the Indian Ocean. Within the scope of practicable capabilities in the Pacific Basin, Japan could hope to maintain economic access to Southeast Asia, Oceania and the Americas through a combination of diplomacy and the “cooperation of American and Australian sea power”. Given these strategic parameters, Sekino maintained that Japan’s vulnerability was such that it simply could not afford to ignore the safety of its seaborne commerce.

Three military threat scenarios facing Japan were identified: nuclear attack, invasion and a *guerre de course*, each potentially jeopardising the survival of the state. The probability of a nuclear attack or invasion occurring was judged to be “virtually nil”, because of the deterrent effect of Article V of the 1960 U.S-Japan Security Treaty. In contrast, a *guerre de course* directed at Japan’s maritime commerce was judged the most likely scenario. Sekino’s reasoning for this was twofold. First, with the growth of its annual imports to around 300,000 tons, Sekino believed that a blockade of seaborne imports of fuel, raw materials, foodstuffs and military supplies could choke Japan’s industrial base and war-fighting ability as it had done during the Pacific War, despite the apparent restraining influence of nuclear weapons on large-scale conflict (see Chapter Three). Second, Sekino suggested that an aggressor would actively favour the *guerre de course* as a means of applying indirect military pressure on Japan at comparatively low risk of US retaliation because, under the terms of Article V of the Security Treaty, “Japan cannot expect the cooperation of the powerful Seventh Fleet in protecting maritime traffic”<sup>65</sup>. Envisaging that a Soviet naval campaign against Japanese shipping would be accompanied by domestic political unrest orchestrated by Communist sympathisers, he speculated: “Such a two-pronged offensive would deplete

<sup>63</sup> Against nuclear threats, Sekino believed the US nuclear umbrella would deter the Soviet Union from attacking Japan, although he also thought that a “local retaliatory force” might be required to deter China at some point in the future.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. p 102.

<sup>65</sup> Quoted in James E. Auer, ‘Japan’s Maritime Self-Defense Force: An Appropriate Maritime Strategy?’, *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 24, No.4, December 1971, p 9



both the nation's livelihood and the fighting power of the self-defense forces". With Japan domestically divided over the legitimacy of defence and security relations with the United States, small-scale attacks on shipping might be launched in order to undermine Japanese confidence in the Security Treaty and sap the national will to resist; their "psychological" effect achieving strategic objectives out of all proportion to the physical damage inflicted and forces committed. Sekino argued the MSDF should prioritise the protection of sea communications in Japan's defence over an anti-invasion role, to "hold out" long enough for US forces to intervene, or to inflict sufficient attrition on enemy submarines and aircraft to force a halt to attacks on shipping.

Sekino argued that it would be a realistic objective for Japan to meet its basic import requirements in wartime, at half the rate of peacetime consumption or about 150,000 tons, to fall back on Southeast Asia, Australasia and the Americas as a supply base, and establish a "maritime safety zone" in the waters north of Indonesia for the passage of merchant vessels and military supplies. By utilising geographic factors in its favour, Sekino thought that a viable sea lane defence concept could be developed in concert with the United States and regional states, in which the MSDF would have primary responsibility.

In case of a war with the Soviet Union, Sekino anticipated that "attacks on Japanese sea communications by submarines and airplanes must be the main tasks of the Soviet Pacific Fleet, if it should operate against Japan"<sup>66</sup>. Soviet long range land-based aviation, principally Tu-95 'Bears' and Tu-16 'Badgers' would be "well suited for finding and attacking convoys". However, since they would have to operate without fighter escort in order to attack shipping passing south of Japan, Sekino judged that "large-scale attacks by these planes would not be expected"<sup>67</sup>. The major threat foreseen was from the Soviet Pacific submarine fleet, which he estimated at 100 boats of all types. Against Soviet Pacific Fleet units concentrated at Vladivostok, Japan would be able to block access from the Sea of Japan through the key straits controlling access to the Pacific and Sea of Okhotsk, by monitoring the straits in peacetime and preparing to mine them in war. Controlling the Tsugarū and Shimonoseki straits, Japan would also be able to inhibit Soviet naval passage through the Tsushima (Korea) Strait and Sōya

<sup>66</sup> Sekino Hideo, 'Japan and Her Maritime Defense', *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, May 1971, Vol. 97, No. 819, pp 107-108.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* p 105.



(La Perouse) Strait, leaving only the shallow and often ice-bound Tartar Strait, separating Sakhalin and Russia's Maritime Province, wholly beyond Japan's reach<sup>68</sup>.

Since the blockade of straits alone could not be expected to prevent all enemy submarines and aircraft from infiltrating into the Pacific and East China Sea, Sekino proposed to exploit other features of Japan's archipelagic geography, by building chains of acoustic listening stations and air bases located on islands along its southwest and southeasterly approaches. To the southwest, the Amami and Ryūkyū Islands stretched almost to Taiwan. Beyond Taiwan, the Philippine archipelago would complete a partial barrier against the East China and South China Seas, as far south as Borneo. To the south east, the Izu/Ogasawara Bonin/Kazan Retto chains (collectively termed the Nampō Islands), combined with the Marianas and Micronesia to form a second island screen facing the open waters of the Pacific.

In terms remarkably similar to those drawn up by Admiral Oikawa's Imperial Navy staff in 1943, Sekino envisioned the creation of a vast "protected lake" within an arc of open water between these two elongated island chains stretching from Japan to Indonesia, through which Japanese merchant ships and supply vessels could sail in relative security, transporting enough strategic commodities and materiel to ensure national survival. Within the "maritime safety zone" itself, patrol aircraft, attack submarines, destroyers and escorts assigned to high-value convoys would operate in coordinated fashion to minimise reaction times. Sekino was confident that "hunter-killer teams" would be able to detect and destroy most Soviet submarines. Very-low-frequency active sonar and passive hydrophone arrays dispersed at intervals along the eastern island chain would ensure a "high chance that targets would be detected during their passage from 100, or even 200, miles away", enabling "patrol planes and helicopters based on some of these islands ... to reach the points of detection within one hour"<sup>69</sup>. While Soviet nuclear submarines operating south of Japan would be unaffected by fuel limitations, Sekino claimed that their effective range would be constrained by Japan's cumulative surveillance, patrol and ASW activities.

---

<sup>68</sup> Japan's strategic advantage as a natural barrier to passage from the Sea of Japan was equally evident to US Cold War planners who have sought Japanese help in monitoring the Tsushima, Tsugarū and particularly the Sōya straits since the 1960s. Japan began laying acoustic monitoring equipment in the Tsugarū Strait in 1968, while sound surveillance sonar system (SOSUS) sets were also installed in the Tsushima and Sōya straits. (Usui Naoaki, 'Japan Plans to Bolster Already Formidable ASW Capability', *Defense News*, June 24, 1991, p 14)

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. p 120.



To carry out the maritime safety zone concept, Sekino estimated that a fleet of around 500,000 tons and 570 aircraft would be needed (Figure 12).

**Figure 12:** Sekino's optimal MSDF force structure

<b>ASW forces</b> (415,500 tons)
6 nuclear attack submarines (SSN) of 3,000 tons each; 9 conventionally powered attack submarines (SSK) of 1,500 tons each 3 small helicopter carriers of 20,000 tons each 66 destroyers (DD) of 4,000 tons each 30 destroyer escorts (DE) of 2,000 tons each
<b>Counter-invasion/coastal defence</b> (118,000 tons)
16 DD of 4,000 tons each 16 DE of 2,000 tons each
<b>Mine Warfare</b> (32,000 tons)
60 Coastal minesweeping craft of 400 tons each 4 Mine-layer craft of 2,000 tons each
<b>Air wing</b> (570 aircraft)
198 land-based aircraft 24 flying boats 348 helicopters

It was estimated that partial implementation could be achieved with 300,000 tons and 400 aircraft. With its actual strength of about 130,000 tons and around 40 ASW ships, in 1971, Sekino judged that the MSDF "is able only to protect in convoys 20-30 per cent of the nation's maritime transportation, for a distance of several hundred miles from Japan; that is in the waters bounded by the mainland, the Nampō Islands and Nansei Islands"<sup>70</sup>. However, at a minimum, Sekino thought tankers could be escorted from Palau, between Saipan and Indonesia, which he proposed could be developed as a staging and storage point for Japan's oil supplies in wartime.

While the concept of a Maritime Safety Zone and the build-up of Japan's ASW forces was predicated upon a potential threat to Japanese merchant shipping, Sekino thought that Japan's military task would be:

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. p 103.

“to relieve the U.S. Polaris submarines and the Seventh Fleet of the dangers of enemy submarines by means of the safety zone, because these forces would then be more secure in carrying out their missions. In this manner, Japan could enhance the security of sea communications which bind together, and permit the survival of, the nations of the free world in the Pacific. Furthermore, this may be the maximum measure permitted Japan at sea under our current Constitution.”<sup>71</sup>

That Sekino's views represented more than a marginal view within the MSDF is suggested by the publication of an internal JDA instruction pamphlet dating from February 1970. The pamphlet, disclosed in a 1980 article by Nishijima Ryoichi, outlined the importance of a blue-water sea lane defence role for the MSDF, stating:

“The removal of threats against our sea lanes of communication is vital in securing survival of the nation. All threats, including the direct invasion of our homeland, could be more easily prevented in advance if the attack from the sea is stemmed or thwarted. ... So we must try to oppose and destroy the enemy fleet to secure our sea lanes of communication. A defensive ‘fortress strategy’ is not a realistic one. Those large-scale offensive operations we are not allowed to carry out under the restrictions of the present constitution despite their necessity will have to be conducted by the US forces but the MSDF should work in the direction of mitigating the limitations as much as it can in order to eliminate the danger of becoming a besieged fleet”<sup>72</sup>.

## ii) Kaihara's counter-view.

Kaihara Osamu was a senior official within the National Defense Council whose more restrictive view of defence posture was both representative of non-uniform JDA officials and a natural counterweight to the ‘navalist’ views of Sekino. Kaihara held in common with Sekino that the SDF were chronically under-prepared to achieve their stated mission of rebuffing a conventional attack on Japan. However, Kaihara was strongly opposed to the ambitions of MSDF officers to expand the scale and scope of maritime operations to protect Japan's sea lanes, which he regarded as an echo of the strategic debates of the 1930s, when Imperial Navy officers had helped to lead Japan into an ‘unwinnable’ war with the United States. Kaihara would remain a forceful,

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. p 121.

<sup>72</sup> Nishijima Ryoichi. ‘Participation of Maritime Self-Defense Forces in RIMPAC’, *Asia Pacific Community*, No. 7, Winter 1980, pp 43-53.



public critic of the sea lanes defence concept when this resurfaced as the focus of alliance cooperation in the 1980s.

Kaihara's reading of Japan's strategic liabilities, as an island nation located near Asia's military power centres, lacking in strategic depth, devoid of natural resources and with a concentrated urban infrastructure and population, led him to the opposite of Sekino's "unrealistic" conclusions<sup>73</sup>. He argued that Japan's strategic vulnerabilities would put the SDF at such an obvious disadvantage in any conflict with the Soviet Union -- its main potential adversary -- that its only rational mission should be conventional deterrence against an invasion. In his eyes, charging the MSDF with protecting Japan's commercial sea lanes was a nostalgically driven "beautiful dream", reflecting a "guilty conscience" over the Imperial Navy's negligence in failing to protect Japan's merchant arm during the Pacific War.

Kaihara criticised the use of abstract terms such as 'sea route zones' (*kōrotai*), 'protection of maritime transportation' and 'sea lanes defence' (*shiiren bōei*) as lacking in concrete meaning or operational utility. In reality, he argued that sea lanes were not static areas of sea space capable of being defended like territory, but potentially limitless. Even if such a task were possible, Kaihara argued that Japan lacked the economic resources to commit to such an undertaking. Moreover, the technical difficulties involved in each of the four stages of anti-submarine warfare -- detection, classification, localisation and destruction -- suggested that the MSDF would be unable to prevent a determined Soviet Pacific submarine force from attacking Japanese commerce, a force which by the beginning of the 1970s out-numbered the total US submarine fleet at the outbreak of war in 1941 by a factor of three. Furthermore, a strategic requirement to blockade Soviet submarines within the Sea of Japan would be highly provocative, possibly unconstitutional and risk a pre-emptive air strike that would decimate the largely unprotected frontline equipment and infrastructure of the SDF.

Kaihara criticised Nakasone's plan to defend the *nansei* and *nantō kōrotai* from "rampaging" Soviet submarines with two ASW helicopter carriers, as operationally non-viable. The southeastern sea route alone, 1,000 nm long and 240 nm wide, contained a

---

<sup>73</sup> Kaihara Osamu, 'Jissai Mondai to shite Fukanō, On the Sea-Lane Defense Problem in Dispute No. 2, *Sekai no Kansen* ('Ships of the World'), December 1982, pp 129-30; and James E. Auer, *The Postwar Rearmament of Japanese Maritime Forces, 1945-71*, Praeger, New York, 1973, pp 134-39.

surface area of 777,600 square kilometres, or double that of Japan itself<sup>74</sup>. He disputed the notion that a single helicopter carrier deployed on patrol could establish sub-surface sea control over such a vast area of open ocean, interpreting the JDA's focus on the submarine threat as a justification for the acquisition of expensive, ocean-going ASW escorts and long-range patrol aircraft.

Kaihara argued that the defence of sea lanes, as an abstract, was an illusory concept beyond the reach of even the US Navy. He cited a 1970 assessment by a senior ASW officer in the US Navy, Vice-Admiral T.F. Caldwell, that the US Navy would be unable to mount continuous trans-atlantic convoys in wartime, and a similar statement by the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral James Holloway, in 1975, that the United States would be unable to guarantee convoys of oil tankers from the Persian Gulf to Europe and North America<sup>75</sup>. While smaller navies such as the Royal Navy possessed the capability to secure sea transport in chokepoints such as the Dover Strait, doing so within areas of open sea was "impossible". If the US Navy and its western allies struggled with the task of sea lane protection in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, Kaihara asked, what hope could Japan have of achieving this on its own in the Pacific? Although he was not opposed to MSDF participation in patrol or convoy operations in the Northwest Pacific, if the United States requested Japan's assistance, this mission did not in his opinion equate with the security of Japan's commercial sea lanes. In contrast to Sekino's advocacy of a blue water role for Japan extending throughout the Western Pacific, Kaihara concluded that the more operationally realistic and constitutionally legitimate goal for the MSDF should be to improve its capability to counter an invasion -- a mission that would confine its duties to Japan's coastal periphery.

## VI. The Primacy of constraints.

From 1972, Japanese defence policy reverted to the incremental approach of previous LDP-led governments, based on the consolidation of existing capabilities. The 'dream' of autonomous defence foundered together with Nakasone's draft version of the Fourth Defense Build-up Programme, while discussion of the *maraka bōeiron* also ebbed. In the debate over what kind of defence policy Japan should develop for the 1970s it was essentially Kaihara's viewpoint, stressing territorial defence over maritime force projection, that prevailed, although not to the extent that the MSDF was retrenched to a

<sup>74</sup> Kaihara Osamu, 'Jissai Mondai to shite Fukanō', On the Sea-Lane Defense Problem in Dispute No. 2, *Sekai no Kansen* ('Ships of the World'), December 1982, pp 130-31.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid. p 133.



coastal defence force. Domestic and external constraints were instrumental in this process, while bureaucratic politics and personalities were also important.

After Nakasone left the JDA in mid-1971, the Agency suffered a succession of scandals and accidents, including the collision of an ASDF fighter and a passenger jet in July, which reinforced its disadvantaged position as a sub-ministerial organ within the government. Nakasone's immediate successors at the JDA were short-lived in the post, less charismatic and either unable or unwilling to support the draft so closely associated with their predecessor, which was duly rejected by the National Defense Council. A less ambitious version put forward by the Agency was sent back and a third version, heavily trimmed by the MoF, was finally approved by the cabinet in October 1972.

Neither Prime Minister Sato Eisaku's administration, nor the successor government of Tanaka Kakuei had any wish to revisit the controversy generated at home and abroad by Nakasone's draft plan, and defence was subordinated to higher policy priorities in the period 1972-75, including finalising the Okinawa reversion, normalisation of relations with the People's Republic of China and austerity induced by the OPEC Oil Crisis. Although Nakasone had been intensely conscious of the need to forge greater public support for the SDF, an agenda that he would also pursue as prime minister in the 1980s, his attempts whilst at the JDA to propel policy ahead of popular and bureaucratic consensus heightened domestic divisions and aroused suspicions abroad. This experience demonstrated to the LDP leadership and civilian planners at the JDA that further increases in defence spending were politically unsupportable.

Autonomous defence also failed to gain political backing because Sato was preoccupied with the Okinawa reversion, finalised in May 1972. In addition to the practical challenges of expanded territorial defence responsibilities, symbolically, the recovery of Okinawa boosted the confidence of Japanese leaders, for whom the return of the islands to rule from Tokyo had long been a priority and as such marked a watershed in the country's relationship with the United States. The security implications of the handover were addressed in the Joint Communiqué released by President Richard Nixon and Prime Minister Sato in January 1972. By explicitly linking Japan's security with Korea and Taiwan, and the role of US bases in Okinawa to maintaining the security of the region, the Communiqué alleviated Japanese decision-makers' uncertainty about the future of the US security guarantee which, at the strategic level, had fanned official consideration of autonomous defence. Conversely, by removing ambiguities about the

freedom of US forces to operate out of bases in Okinawa, the Nixon-Sato Communiqué also settled US security concerns related to reversion, although local frictions caused by the heavy US presence on the island continue to complicate bilateral security relations in the early 21st century<sup>76</sup>. However, the political triumph of Okinawa's return was only temporary for the Sato government, which quickly foundered under the weight of political scandals and fell from power only three months later.

The incoming administration of Tanaka Kakuei, despite his own assertive brand of conservatism, was receptive to quantitative restrictions on Japan's defence capability, partly to stem opposition attacks over defence spending, which had continued to increase in the absence of a finally approved version of the Fourth Defence Build-up Plan. Moreover, China had emerged as a new foreign policy variable following President Nixon's 'shock' re-establishment of US-China relations in February 1972. China had been a vociferous critic of the Nakasone Plan and in October 1971, the official *Peking Review* signalled growing concern about Japan's ambitions to develop a naval presence in the Malacca Straits, alleging that the LDP had circulated an internal report on maritime defence including a reference to securing its "maritime lifeline" in the straits and to building up "the military strength to meet requirements". In response, Nakasone's successor as JDA Director General reassured opposition parties in the Diet that it would be "inconceivable that MSDF craft could ever operate in the Straits of Malacca, let alone the Indian Ocean"<sup>77</sup>.

In October 1972, while visiting Beijing to discuss normalisation with the People's Republic, Tanaka offered to impose an official limit on Japanese defence spending of 1 per cent of GNP to Zhou Enlai, Mao Zedong's foreign minister. On October 6, one week after returning from Beijing, Tanaka directed the JDA to draw up limits for 'Defense Strength in Peacetime' (*heiwaji no bōeiryoku*), partly to allay Chinese concerns about Japan's defence build-up, as well as to draw the teeth of Diet opposition shortly before the cabinet was set to approve procurement plans for the Fourth Defense Build-up Plan. Neither Sato (Kishi Nobusuke's younger brother) nor Tanaka were considered natural 'doves', but both were led by domestic and external constraints to adopt moderate defence policy stances. When Tanaka was forced to step down over the

<sup>76</sup> Tokyo's tacit acceptance of the continuing use of Kadena air base for B-52 bombing missions over North Vietnam and Cambodia after reversion was part of the price for securing the return of Okinawa and the affirmation of the US security guarantee to Japan inherent in the Communiqué.

<sup>77</sup> Yaacov Y.I. Vertzberger, *Coastal States, Regional Powers, Superpowers and the Malacca-Singapore Straits*, Institute of East Asian Studies Research Paper, University of California, 1984, p 64.



Lockheed corruption scandal in late 1974 he was succeeded by Prime Minister Miki Takeo, a moderate on defence by conviction, rather than convenience. His leadership and that of his successors, Fukuda Takeo and Ohira Masayoshi ensured that a favourable political climate was established in which a systematic review of defence policy to formalise the *ad hoc* moderate approach of the Sato and Tanaka administrations could be achieved.

*Jishu bōei* also ran into opposition from the ministries with influence concerning security policy. MOFA had cooperated with the JDA in 1969, in return for its assistance in brokering the technical aspects of the defence implications of the Okinawa handover with the US military, as a means of improving its bargaining position with the United States during negotiations over Okinawa<sup>78</sup>. This cooperation ended once the Okinawa question was superseded by normalisation with China as the main diplomatic priority. However, the most trenchant opposition to an expansion of defence spending came from the MoF<sup>79</sup>.

From its initial 1969 announcement of a planned Fourth Defense Build-up Plan until the release of Nakasone's draft plan in April 1970, the JDA had been careful to avoid releasing detailed cost estimates. However, as the plan was understood to require a doubling of defence expenditure, the MoF regarded *jishu bōei* as a threat to its fiscal goal of maintaining defence spending within 1 per cent of GNP. In an indication of the influence which the Ministry exerted over the JDA, the MoF went as far as to issue a rebuttal to the strategic premise of the JDA's proposals for expanding Japan's maritime defence, in 1969. The MoF advanced three specific counter-arguments:

Firstly, the reversion of Okinawa did not justify the expansion of Japan's defence capabilities, because "it is not conceivable at all that (a foreign power) will invade Japan through Okinawa" as long as U.S. forces remained there.

Secondly, convoying was no longer effective, given the increase in Japan's fuel consumption and the impossibility of directly protecting the number of tankers required to import an estimated 100 million tons of crude oil per year.

<sup>78</sup> 'To Strengthen Maritime Defense After Okinawa Reversion; JDA Explains to Foreign Ministry', *Yomiuri Shimbun*, May 17, 1969, Daily Summary of the Japanese Press, US Embassy, Tokyo, May 1969.

<sup>79</sup> Michael J. Green, *Arming Japan: Defense Production, Alliance Politics and the Postwar Search for Autonomy*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1995, pp 59-62.

Thirdly, the JDA's plans to defend maritime transportation meant exceeding the threshold of localised conflict outlined in the Third Defense Build-up Plan, because attacks on Japan's shipping lanes could be conducted remotely and were likely to involve foreign merchant ships, the defence of which would exceed the Constitutional mandate for self-defence<sup>80</sup>.

When the JDA released its 5.2 billion yen cost estimate for the Fourth Plan, in April 1970, the MoF argued against any increase on the grounds that this exceeded the projected GNP growth rate. Ultimately, a diminished budget of 4.6 billion yen was agreed upon in October 1972<sup>81</sup>. Defence spending nonetheless grew 17 per cent in 1972-76, even as it continued to decline as a proportion of government spending, from 7.0 to 6.2 per cent. However, a government-wide austerity programme ordered in the wake of the 1973 Oil Crisis subjected the defence budget to tighter controls as Japan was plunged into its first post-war recession in 1974 and the National Defense Council placed a freeze on defence acquisitions in December 1975.

Acquisitions slated for the MSDF as part of the final version of the Fourth Defense Build-up Plan included a total of 13 destroyers equipped with SAM, surface-to-surface missiles and helicopters, five submarines, a fleet support ship and 92 combat aircraft. However, at the end of fiscal 1976, owing to the procurement freeze, the MSDF lagged more than 30 per cent behind its acquisition targets. Only eight of the intended 13 destroyers had been built and the MSDF's plans to acquire its first supply ship had to be sacrificed<sup>82</sup>. MSDF strength in August 1975 stood at 45 escort ships, 40 mine-countermeasures craft, 35 patrol boats and 15 submarines, with vessels of all types amounting to less than 200,000 tons.

## VII. The National Defense Programme Outline (*taikō*).

Reflecting the above confluence of factors, civilians within the JDA were well-placed to push a moderate agenda in the early 1970s. The most important of these was Kubo Takuya, head of the JDA Defense Policy Bureau from November 1970 to June 1974 and subsequently appointed Administrative Vice-Minister -- the top bureaucratic post in the agency. Kubo came to the Defence Agency from a police background, concerned that

<sup>80</sup> 'Finance Ministry Is Guarded Against Possible Increase in Defense Power in Course of Okinawa Reversion Negotiations', *Asahi Shimbun*, May 23, 1969, Daily Summary of the Japanese Press, US Embassy, Tokyo, May 1969.

<sup>81</sup> Katahara Eichi. *The Politics of Japanese Defence Policy Making, 1975-1989*, unpublished PhD thesis, Griffith University, April 1990, p 133.

<sup>82</sup> *Asahi Shimbun*, August 28, 1975, p 2; and *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, June 5, 1978, p 1.



the incremental build up of SDF capabilities should not open-ended. Beginning in 1971, he began circulating memos within the Agency written under a pseudonym, canvassing support for a strategic policy framework to guide defence policy beyond the scheduled completion of the Fourth Defense Build-up Plan, in 1976<sup>83</sup>. Kubo's model of a Standard Defense Force Concept (*kibanteki no bōeiryoku kōsō*) evolved gradually and was broadened through the input of civilian advisory groups to eventually underpin the 1976 National Defense Programme Outline, or *taikō*, which served as the foundation of defence policy until its revision in 1995.

In common with Nakasone, Kubo emphasised that an essential condition of an effective defence capability was to build domestic support for the SDF. He also perceived Japan's defence dilemma to be peculiarly acute owing to lingering suspicions about Japanese militarism in the region, believing that any attempt by Japan to compensate for perceived vulnerability through an independent military build-up was liable to spur a regional arms race. Externally, Kubo determined that in a security context defined globally by superpower détente and regionally by the maintenance of the US-Japan security relationship, Japan's strategic environment was likely to remain benign. On this basis it was decided that the posture of the SDF could be premised on the probability that no major threats were likely to emerge within a ten-year time-frame. SDF capabilities could therefore be capped at approximately the levels already attained by the early 1970s without undermining security. Kaihara thought that the qualitative force levels detailed in the final, scaled-back version of the Fourth Defence Build-up Programme, subject to qualitative improvements in certain areas, were sufficient to provide a deterrent against "small-scale aggression" and to ensure the cooperation of the United States, upon which Japan would continue to rely for extended conventional and nuclear deterrence.

Qualitatively, the Standard Defense Force Concept recommended improvements to SDF capabilities in neglected areas owing to the bias in past procurements towards frontline capabilities. Areas targeted for improvement included force readiness, survivability, logistical support and intelligence. Maintenance of a full surveillance and intelligence posture (dubbed 'a rabbit's ears'; *usagi no mimi*) was highlighted as pivotal to the credibility of a smooth "defence structure alteration potential in case of substantial geopolitical changes". Intelligence was one area of defence capability in which moves

---

<sup>83</sup> Katahara Eiichi. *The Politics of Japanese Defence Policy Making, 1975-1989*, unpublished PhD thesis, Griffith University, April 1990, pp 135-37.



towards greater defence self-reliance accelerated at a time when the build-up of frontline platforms was being de-emphasised<sup>84</sup>.

Kubo's first opportunity to incorporate the Standard Defense Force Concept into official defence policy came when Prime Minister Tanaka issued the 'Defense Strength in Peacetime' directive to the JDA in October 1972. The concept as announced in the Diet, on February 1, 1973, embodied most of the ideas in the Standard Defense Force Concept and outlined quantitative restrictions similar to force levels already achieved by the Ground and Air SDF:

- GSDF: 5 armies, 13 divisions, 180,000 men;
- ASDF: 3 regional air forces (8 wings); 1 composite wing, 800 aircraft; and
- MSDF: 5 regional commands; 4-5 escort flotillas, 280,000 tons<sup>85</sup>.

However, the government was compelled to withdraw the Defense Strength in Peacetime shortly after the draft was put before the Diet, as neither the Socialists nor the Communists were prepared to confer *de facto* recognition on the SDF as the price of approving quantitative limits on Japan's defence capabilities<sup>86</sup>. It was not until the Miki administration came to power in December 1974 that a favourable political atmosphere was re-established. Promoted to JDA Vice-Minister in July 1975, Kubo received strong support from both Miki and his new Minister of State for Defense, Sakata Michita, who would remain in charge of the JDA for an unusually long period, from December 1974 to December 1976. Between them, Kubo and Sakata presided over the task of drafting a replacement to the Fourth Defense Build-up Plan, with an up-dated version of the Standard Defense Force Concept as its centre-piece.

Under the guidance of Kubo and Sakata, parallel measures designed to build consensus behind the drafting of a successor plan were implemented. A broad-based civilian advisory panel, the 'Forum on Defense Issues', was set up to widen participation in defence policy to include business leaders and academics such as Kosaka Masataka. The panel met several times between April and June 1975, its recommendations feeding into the Standard Defense Force Concept. The following June, to signal its commitment

<sup>84</sup> *Defense of Japan 1977*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, p 57.

<sup>85</sup> Linton Wells, 'The Sea and Japan's Strategic Interests 1975-1985', John Hopkins University PhD thesis, Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1975, p 203, footnote 15.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Ito Kenichi, Mitsubishi Electric Corp, Tokyo, March 8, 1999.



to transparency, the JDA released its first defence white paper since 1970, resuming annual publication thereafter.

The Standard Defense Force Concept was incorporated formally into Japan's defence policy with the adoption of the *taikō* by the National Defense Council, approved by the Miki cabinet on October 29, 1976. It identified four requirements to guide future defence capability:

- i) Japan should possess the assorted functions required for national defence, including logistical support, while maintaining a balanced structure of organisation and deployment.
- ii) A full surveillance posture should be maintained in peacetime.
- iii) Japan should be able to effectively deal with any situation up to the level of limited and small-scale aggression.
- iv) Japan should have a force structure capable of being "smoothly adapted" when required by a serious change in circumstances<sup>87</sup>.

Quantitative limits on frontline platforms and combat units, were set out in an Attached Table (*beppyō*) (Figure 13).

---

<sup>87</sup> *Defense of Japan 1977*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, p 53; and *Defense of Japan 1995*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, p 73.

**Figure 13:** The Attached Table of the 1976 National Defense Programme Outline (*taikō*)

<b>SDF</b>	<b>Basic Units</b>	<b>Main Equipment</b>
<b>GSDF</b>	Regional Units  Mobile Units     Low Altitude Ground-to-Air Missile	12 Divisions 2 Combined Brigades 1 Armoured Division 1 Artillery Brigade 1 Airborne Brigade 1 Training Brigade 1 Helicopter Brigade 8 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Groups (180,000 personnel in total)
<b>ASDF</b>	Aircraft Control & Warning Interceptor Support Fighter Air Reconnaissance Air Transport Early Warning High Altitude Ground-to-Air Missile  Main Equipment: Combat Aircraft	28 Groups 10 Squadrons 3 Squadrons 1 Squadron 3 Squadrons 1 Squadron 6 Groups  Approx. 430
<b>MSDF</b>	ASW Surface Ship Units (for mobile operations) ASW Surface Ship Units (regional district units) Submarine Units Minesweeping Units Land-based ASW/Patrol aircraft  Main Equipment: ASW Surface ships Submarines Combat Aircraft	4 Escort Flotillas  10 Divisions  6 Divisions 2 Flotillas 16 Squadrons  Approx. 60 ships 16 Submarines Approx. 220

Source: *Defense of Japan 1995*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, p 270.



i) Maritime capabilities under the *taikō*.

Flowing largely from the operational requirements of its anti-submarine and mine warfare missions, the MSDF structure set out in the *taikō* comprised four major areas:

- a) Four escort flotillas<sup>88</sup>, defined as basic, surface anti-submarine units for mobile operations, would be maintained to ensure that one would be operational at all times.
- b) A total of ten ship divisions would be deployed within Japan's five coastal defence districts, enabling one division per district to be on constant alert to carry out coastal surveillance, defence and anti-submarine operations.
- c) Submarine, ASW helicopter and minesweeping units would also be maintained. Six submarine divisions, each composed of two or three boats, would be assigned to conduct surveillance of important harbours and straits. The MSDF's minesweeper force would be divided between coastal units under district-level command, and two flotillas assigned to cover the Sea of Japan.
- d) Land-based antisubmarine and patrol aircraft would conduct surveillance missions, patrol nearby seas and protect surface ships.

To meet these operational requirements, relatively few changes in defence equipment were outlined, apart from the addition of two submarines and approximately ten ASW/maritime surveillance aircraft. The totals set out in the Attached Table allowed for approximately 60 escort destroyers, 16 submarines and 220 combat aircraft. In addition, the MSDF were authorised to possess around 40 offshore and coastal mine warfare ships as well as small numbers of amphibious landing ships and to acquire a fleet replenishment vessel.

The *taikō* spelled an apparent victory for those who had sought quantitative limits against the incremental expansion of defence capability under the numbered defence plans without any accompanying strategic rationale. In other respects, the *taikō* was vague enough to allow for the open-ended qualitative enhancement of defence capability through the operation of smaller numbers of advanced platforms acquired



with “due consideration to qualitative improvements aimed at parity with the technical standards of other nations”. Nor was a completion date specified, or spending guidelines laid down. As an added constraint to mollify the opposition parties, and in accordance with one of the main recommendations of the report issued by the Forum on Defense Issues in September 1975, on November 5, the Miki administration added the weight of a cabinet resolution to a limit of 1 per cent of GNP ratio on defence spending, which had been observed unofficially since 1967.

While the annual ratio of defence spending to GNP stayed at or below 0.90 per cent from 1976-79, annual defence budgets continued to increase by an average of 12.5 per cent during this period as the economy rebounded from the Oil Crisis. However, the 1 per cent ceiling helped to neutralise political opposition, enabling the government to treat defence policy increasingly as a budgetary issue to be delegated for technical management within the JDA without engendering the kind of parliamentary controversy that had attended the Fourth Defence Build-up Programme.

ii) Post-*taikō* maritime capabilities.

During the formulation of the *Taiko*, the most keenly debated question related to SDF force structure was whether the MSDF should have four or five escort flotillas. The MSDF maintained that a fifth escort flotilla was necessary, to enable it permanently to assign one flotilla to the Sea of Japan. Given overhaul and crew-rotation requirements, it was argued that a fifth flotilla would provide a reserve capability guaranteeing the MSDF's ability to maintain two flotillas at high readiness and allow it simultaneously to cover the Sea of Japan and Japan's Pacific approaches<sup>89</sup>. The view of the JDA civilian internal bureaux was that four escort flotillas already provided sufficient coverage. The failure of MSDF officers and civilian JDA officials to agree upon force structure had resulted in the compromise formula of 4-5 escort groups when the Defense Capability in Peacetime was announced in February 1973. However, during the drafting of the *taikō*, the MSDF's preference for a fifth flotilla was included in the draft version of the Attached Table. Although Prime Minister Tanaka indicated support for a fifth flotilla, according to a senior JDA official at the time, this was resisted by both the JDA and MoF<sup>90</sup>. The strongest resistance came from the MoF, which led to the number of escort

<sup>88</sup> Each flotilla is typically composed eight escort destroyers equipped with ASW helicopters (Norman Levin, Mark Lorell, Arthur Alexander, *The Wary Warriors: Future Directions in Japanese Security Policies*, Rand, Santa Monica, 1993, p 51).

<sup>89</sup> Tokyo Shimbun, March 2, 1974, Daily Summary of the Japanese Press, March 1974, US Embassy, Tokyo, p 14.

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Ito Kenichi, Mitsubishi Electric Corp, Tokyo, March 8, 1999.



flotillas in the final version of the Attached Table being revised down to four. Since 1976, this has remained the basic force structure of the Self-Defense Fleet<sup>91</sup>.

In contrast to the Third and Fourth Defense Build-up Plans, the *taikō* contained no reference to the protection of maritime transportation, although reference to the defence of sea routes out to 1,000 nautical miles was included in materials used by the drafters of the *taikō*<sup>92</sup>. In the final version of the *taikō*, the responsibilities outlined for the MSDF emphasised operations in coastal areas and nearby seas, including surveillance and patrol, defence of harbours, straits and surface ship protection. Within the quantitative limits outlined in the Attached Table, now measured by numbers of vessel types rather than aggregate tonnage, the MSDF would still be able to operate a sizeable ocean-going surface fleet, but short of the scale and vessel types required to project power along the lines Sekino had advocated five years previously.

The *taikō* encouraged the MSDF and its fellow service arms to shift the emphasis of their defence planning away from quantitative expansion as well as promoting a better balance between frontline equipment and previously neglected areas such as logistics, readiness and intelligence. Qualitative modernisation left open the route for a succession of new weapons systems approved in the late 1970s including most importantly, the P-3C, which represented a quantum leap over the P-2J anti-submarine patrol aircraft<sup>93</sup>. In 1979, the first of four new 8,500-ton *Towada*-class fleet-underway-replenishment-vessels was commissioned into service, extending the Self Defense Fleet's capability to undertake sustained blue water operations<sup>94</sup>. Similar capability leaps were achieved by the ASDF through acquisition of the E-2C Airborne Early Warning (AEW) aircraft and the F-15 fighter<sup>95</sup>. Over the 20-year lifetime of the *taikō*, Japan's maritime air and defence capabilities improved far beyond the scope envisioned in 1976.

<sup>91</sup> *Waga Kuni ni okeru Bōeiryoku Seibi no Keika*, 1982, p 88.

<sup>92</sup> Interview with Hoshuyama Noburo, former JDA Director, Defense Facilities Administration Agency, Adviser, Kyoei Life Insurance, Tokyo, March 11, 1999.

<sup>93</sup> Of all the weapons systems acquired by the SDF after the *Taiko*, the P-3C -- approved in December 1978 -- demonstrated that a quantum leap in capability could be achieved within the equipment ceilings outlined in 1976. In contrast to the far more limited P-2J, each P-3C could patrol an area equivalent to Shikoku island and monitor all convergence zones under ideal conditions.

<sup>94</sup> Peter J Woolley and Mark S. Woolley, 'Japan's Sea Lane Defense Revisited', *Strategic Review*, Fall 1996, p 50.

<sup>95</sup> Although the E-2C was designed as a naval platform to give US carrier battle groups an organic AEW capability, the ASDF fought for and gained control over the programme, following the undetected incursion of a defecting Soviet MiG-25, on September 6, 1976, which landed at Hakodate, Hokkaido, exposing the

Despite the defeat of its ambitions to add a fifth flotilla to the Self Defense Fleet and the apparent primacy attached to an anti-invasion role within the *taikō*, the MSDF in other ways carried on with little overall change. The disposition of its major fleet units at Yokosuka and Kure underscored a continued southward-oriented focus on Pacific operations at odds with the growth of Soviet naval strength in the Sea of Japan<sup>96</sup>. Despite not being able to offer credible resistance against “even a moderate air threat”, the MSDF surface fleet continued to organise itself around ‘escort ships’ (*gōeikan*) grouped into escort flotillas (*gōeikantai*) that were configured for a blue-water role, rather than coastal operations in which MSDF planners had little interest<sup>97</sup>. While the *taikō* aligned official defence policy closer to Kaihara’s coastal defence blueprint, the MSDF exploited the ambiguity of the *taikō* as a document to continue equipping and training towards maintaining its blue water capabilities and skills, and preserving the core of a potentially expanded future navy. The roles and blue water capabilities of the MSDF were substantially expanded in the 1980s to encompass a sea lane defence role. However, as is explored in the Chapter Five, the focus would be alliance cooperation rather than the pursuit of an autonomous capability.

### **VIII. Rising sea lane threat perceptions.**

Even as the *taikō* was being implemented, doubts about the strategic premises on which it was based began to surface. In particular, the build-up of maritime capabilities in the Soviet Far East prompted concern over the security of Japan’s sea lanes at both official and private levels. The 1977 defence white paper featured several references to the importance of sea lanes to Japan’s security, mainly in the context of US global strategy. In its international section, the white paper noted that “one of the fundamental reasons behind the build-up of the Soviet navy is believed to be the creation of a challenge to the Western powers’ control of the sea, particularly through the capability to prevent supply and reinforcement from the US mainland by blockading the maritime traffic lanes”. As a result of improvements in Soviet capabilities, the JDA concluded that “the safety of the sea and air lanes from the U.S. mainland is being jeopardised” and that in this context “there is a renewed recognition among Western nations that their closer cooperation with the United States is of critical importance for maintenance and strengthening of their defence capabilities”<sup>98</sup>. The white paper described the “sea traffic

---

shortcomings in Japan’s air defence readiness (*Defense of Japan 1977*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, pp 126-140).

<sup>96</sup> Of the MSDF’s five bases only Maizuru gives direct access to the Sea of Japan.

<sup>97</sup> Linton Wells, *The Sea and Japan’s Strategic Interests 1975-1985*, John Hopkins University PhD thesis, Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1975, p 201.

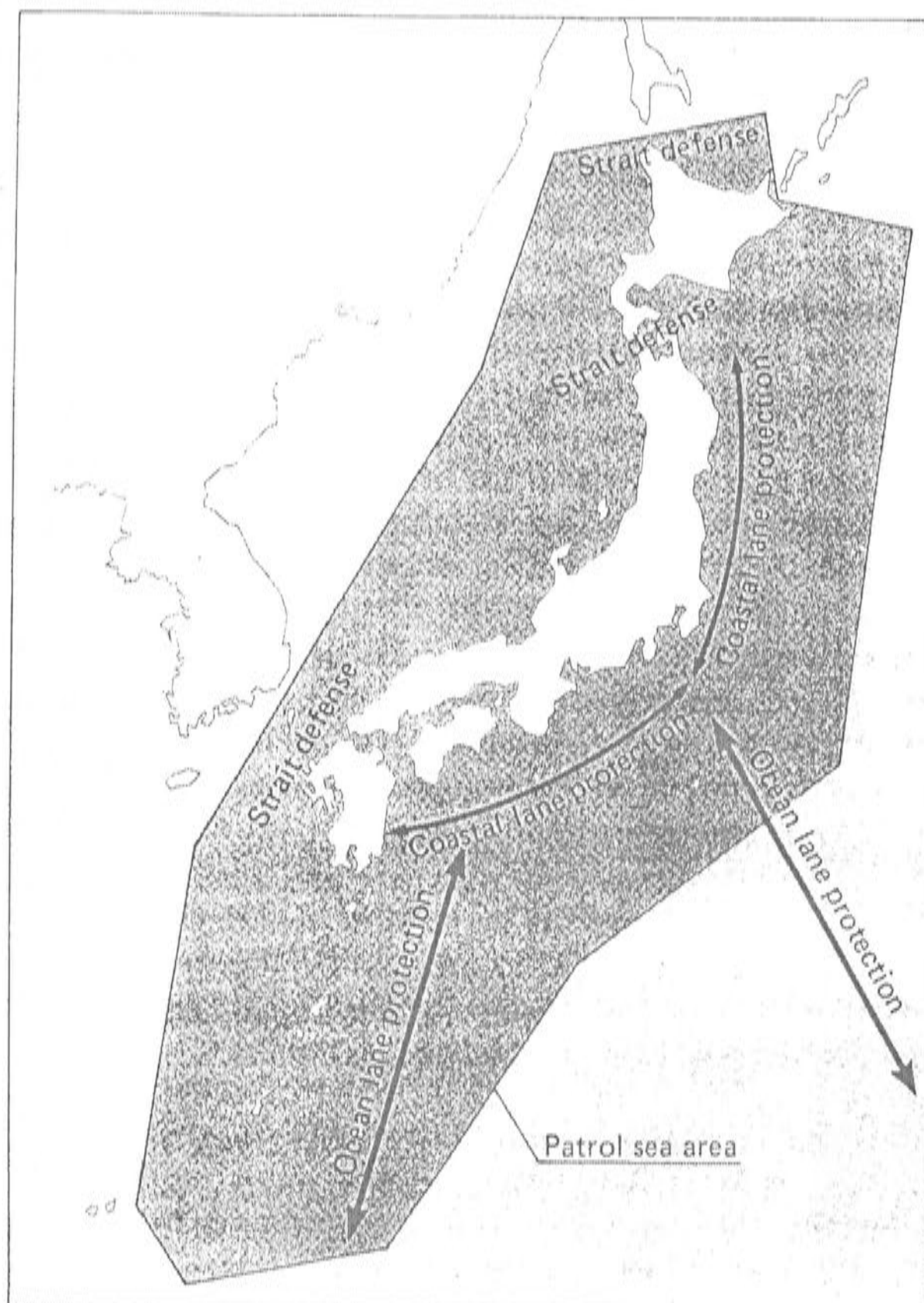
<sup>98</sup> *Defense of Japan 1977*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, p 14.



blockade capability” of the Soviet Pacific submarine fleet as a “matter of concern to the national security of Japan”<sup>99</sup>.

**Map 6:** JDA schematic for Marine Surface Defense, 1977

### Marine Surface Defense



Source: Defense of Japan, 1977, Japan Defense Agency, Tokyo, Japan, p 66.

Outlining MSDF roles as part of the Standard Defense Force Concept, the white paper included an inset diagram depicting ‘ocean lane protection’ along two southwesterly and southeasterly axes (See Map 6). While the radius for Pacific maritime patrol aircraft was set by the JDA at 300 nautical miles from the Pacific coast and 100-200 nautical miles in the Sea of Japan, in addition, one squadron would be deployed “to

<sup>99</sup> Ibid. pp 12-29.

each of the ocean and coastal sea lanes when the necessity for ship protection arises”<sup>100</sup>. Further proof that the protection of the *nantō* and *nansei kōrotai* was still extant as an MSDF mission, despite being absent from the *taikō*, came in November 1977, when Defense Agency Director General Mihara Asao said in testimony before the House of Councillors that “Japan was ready to exercise the right of self-defense generally within 500 miles from its coasts and in important sea lanes within 1,000 miles -- around Saipan to the southeast and Taiwan to the southwest”<sup>101</sup>.

The 1977 white paper also included a section dedicated to “Japan and Sea Communication”, emphasising potential threats to sea lanes and the necessity of protecting marine transportation -- “the lifeline of Japan” -- in a general context of trade and import dependence as well as the 1973 Oil Crisis “which shook Japan’s economic and social systems to their very foundations”<sup>102</sup>. Although aircraft, ship-to-ship missiles and mines were all identified as threats to marine traffic, the white paper highlighted submarines as “the greatest menace”.

Noting that “it is impossible for Japan alone to guarantee the safety of maritime shipping throughout the vast oceans”, the JDA identified a particular need to upgrade Japan’s ASW capability, in order to “promote confidence in the Japan-U.S. security system, the basis of Japanese defense”. The JDA’s analysis of potential sea lane threats, although couched in terms of heightened economic vulnerability to supply disruptions as a result of the Oil Crisis, was, from the viewpoint of alliance politics, partly a reaction to growing US pressure on Japan to boost the level of its ASW capability. The stress placed by the JDA on submarine threats to Japan’s sea communications appeared also in the context of subsequent sections of the white paper given over to explaining the “need for deployment of (a) follow-on ASW aircraft” and were thus partially aimed at preparing the ground for the pending replacement to the ageing P-2J, with the more expensive and far more capable P-3C.

Perceptions of Japan’s potential vulnerability to commerce disruption were in evidence elsewhere. The Oil Crisis and instability in Iran in the late 1970s “brought heated debates on the vulnerability of the sea-lanes and communication between the Middle

<sup>100</sup> Ibid. p 66.

<sup>101</sup> Mihara was replying to a question on Japan’s ability to protect shipping in the Malacca Straits, an exercise that the JDA chief stressed was still beyond both the MSDF’s constitutional mandate and level of capability. (‘Japan Shipping Defenseless in Malacca Strait’, *The Japan Times*, November 16, 1977, p 4).

<sup>102</sup> *Defense of Japan 1977*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, pp 100-01.



East and Japan”<sup>103</sup>. In June 1977, an advisory defence report, *Alternative Force Structure of Japan’s Defence Force*, drawn up by the defence commentator, Sakanaka Tomohisa, concluded “In the light of its reliance on imports of food, energy and raw materials, the threat posed by interrupting the flow of raw materials to Japan would be more serious than a military threat”. The report concluded that while a general anti-shipping offensive against Japan was improbable:

“the fact remains that Japan’s weakness against this form of attack is conceded by nearly all analysts, whether they support or oppose an escort role for the MSDF. Initial losses would be heavy since the submarine fleets would probably be deployed prior to hostilities, and convoy systems could not be organised immediately. These sinkings, particularly if they included a few supertankers, would have great psychological impact”<sup>104</sup>.

The report noted that Japan’s vulnerability to blockade depended partly on non-military measures such as stockpiling, austerity controls and resource substitution. Moreover, the military task of protecting Japan’s maritime commerce unaided in a sustained anti-shipping campaign was something Sakanaka regarded as beyond the capabilities of the MSDF. However, against the apparent impossibility of the military task, so long as the United States was committed to Japan’s defence, preparing to secure at least a portion of the country’s ocean-going imports would be “worthwhile” given that the objective would be merely to ensure Japan’s survival until the conflict could be terminated. Sakanaka stressed that Japan was at a strategic advantage, first, because Soviet naval forces based at Vladivostok were geographically hemmed in; and second, by the belief that the cumulative attrition of Japan’s ASW efforts could be expected incrementally to degrade the submarine threat<sup>105</sup>.

Like Sekino, Sakanaka also emphasised Japan’s peculiar vulnerability to anti-shipping attacks in view of national psychology, perceived economic vulnerability and the memory of the wartime blockade as the “the most single decisive factor in the collapse of the Japanese economy”. In the light of international awareness of these factors, a

<sup>103</sup> Eto Shinkichi. ‘Japanese Perception of National Threats’, in Charles Morrison (ed.) *Threats to Security in East Asia-Pacific*, Pacific Forum/Lexington Books, Lexington Massachusetts, 1983, p 54.

<sup>104</sup> Sakanaka Tomohisa. *Alternative Force Structure of Japan’s Self Defence Force*, Unpublished draft provided by the author, June 1977, pp 30-40.

<sup>105</sup> Allowing for crew rotation, repairs and the priority accorded to protecting the Soviet Far Eastern fleet of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBN), it was estimated in the late 1970s that only around 20 conventional and nuclear attack submarines would be assigned to the SLOC interdiction mission in the

potential enemy might view low-level sporadic attacks on Japanese ships or ships bound for Japan as a low-cost, low-risk means to undermine morale and create uncertainty over the US alliance commitment, aimed ultimately at neutralising Japan during a period of heightened tension, or non-nuclear conflict, between the superpowers<sup>106</sup>.

### Conclusion.

Between systemic pressures on Japan as an independent actor within the international system and constraints developed at the level of domestic politics, the single most important influence on the formation of Japan's defence and security policies after 1945 was the bilateral security link with the United States. After 1950, US pressure on Japan to engage in limited rearmament was the key factor in the re-constitution of armed forces. The US security guarantee also afforded Japan's post-war leaders the strategic space (or "greenhouse", to use Hellman's metaphor<sup>107</sup>) in which to concentrate on economic growth and develop a minimal approach to defence policy through formal and normative constraints that limited the size, power and legal utility of the SDF.

While the redrawing of its borders and reliance on the United States for external security simplified the dynamics of Japan's maritime defence, the post-war expansion of Japan's international trade increased its potential vulnerability to blockade. Notwithstanding their relatively sanguine views about the military threats posed by the Soviet Union, post-war leaders such as Yoshida appreciated the particular importance of US naval protection to Japan's security and were more sympathetic to the creation of Japanese maritime forces than ground forces. Senior MSDF officers, business leaders and politicians -- some of them drawn from the ranks of former Imperial Navy -- regarded the defence of SLOC as a core mission for the MSDF, given Japan's status as a major trading power and the world's largest importer of energy resources. As Sekino indicated, the desire to acquire independent naval capability also reflected doubts among MSDF officers about US willingness to extend extra-territorial security guarantees to Japanese shipping.

Among those who favoured expanding the MSDF into a fully fledged great power navy, as well as those who sought merely to build public support for the government's

---

Western Pacific (Nishijima Ryoichi, 'Participation of Maritime Self-Defense Forces in RIMPAC', *Asia Pacific Community*, No. 7, Winter 1980, pp 49-50.

<sup>106</sup> Sakanaka Tomohisa, *Alternative Force Structure of Japan's Self Defence Force*, Unpublished draft, June 1977, p 39-40.

<sup>107</sup> Donald C. Hellmann, in Clesse, Inoguchi, Keehn and Stockwin (eds), *The Vitality of Japan: Sources of National Strength and Weakness*, St Antony's Press, Oxford, 1997, p 184.



defence policy, there was a common recognition that the rationale of protecting Japan's commercial shipping lanes, with its appeal to 'defensive defence' and compatibility with economically defined norms of security and perceptions of vulnerability, was an elegant and useful device towards overcoming the controversy surrounding all aspects of Japan's post-war maritime rearmament. The defence of the nation's sea lanes, while having a popular resonance matched by few other potential justifications for the Self Defense Forces, was also sufficiently vague and malleable to lend itself to a justification for most aspects of the MSDF's force structure and operations. For similar reasons, examined more closely in the following chapter, sea lane defence was also useful to the United States as a rationale for deepening naval cooperation with Japan, given its interest in utilising the MSDF's complementary capabilities in ASW and mine warfare, and towards countering the legal barriers to inter-operability imposed by the Constitution and the Cabinet Legislative Office's 'ban' on collective self defence.

Despite Nakasone's plans to pursue autonomous defence, Japan's defence build-up was led back onto a minimalist path in the 1970s by the enduring quality of constraints reinforced at systemic, alliance and domestic levels. The JDA's flirtation with 'self-reliance' provoked political dissent from constitutional pacifists, challenged the growth-oriented priorities of the MoF, and was ultimately subordinate to such foreign policy goals as the normalisation of relations with China. The adoption of the *taikō* reflected the ascendance of the minimalist vision supported by Kaihara, Kubo and Sakata over the ambitions of Nakasone and naval advocates represented by Sekino to pursue a policy of naval expansion that would have voided the constraints inherent in the Yoshida Doctrine. However, the basic ambiguity of the *taikō*, a characteristic which it shared with most other aspects of defence policy in the 1945-77 period that were designed to appease both pro- and anti-defence critics, also rendered its constraining function vulnerable to reinterpretation once strategic conditions changed in the late 1970s and 1980s.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Sea Lane Defence and Alliance Cooperation: 1977-90

#### Introduction.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the decision-making process that propelled sea lane defence to the forefront of Japan's defence policy and alliance relations during the 1980s. Following on from the model of post-war drivers and constraints presented in Chapter Four, the major policy-making variables are considered at the levels of Japan's interaction within the international system, the US-Japan Alliance, and Japanese domestic politics. The same questions that framed Chapter Four pertain equally to this chapter. First, how did perceptions of Japan's strategic vulnerability to the disruption of sea lanes drive decision-makers' responses in defence and alliance policy? Second, to what extent were such concerns employed 'politically' as a rationale to legitimise the existence and force structure of the Self Defense Forces (SDF).

In addition, this chapter seeks specifically to explore the decision-making process that led to Prime Minister Sukuki Zenkō's 'pledge' to the United States, in May 1981, that Japan would defend its sea lanes to a distance of 1,000 nautical miles (nm) and how this shaped policy under his administration and that of his successor, Nakasone Yasuhiro. Particular emphasis is placed on developments at the level of late-Cold War US military strategy and alliance politics as factors determining the modernisation of SDF capabilities and Japan's deepening military integration within the Alliance. In terms of domestic politics, the importance of Nakasone's role as an active backer of alliance cooperation and increased defence spending is stressed. At a transnational level of decision-making, attention is also drawn to the role played by Maritime Self Defense Force (MSDF) officers, served by their transnational links to the US military, in advancing sea lane defence as an issue demanding the attention of more reluctant civilian leaders, such as Suzuki, that was instrumental to overcoming domestic constraints on the SDF.

The chapter briefly sets out Suzuki's 1981 statement on sea lane defence, before charting shifts in the global strategic balance and changes in US strategy from the late 1960s, demonstrating how these increased Japan's strategic importance to the United States. The process that led to Suzuki's comments is then analysed in detail, with reference to shifts in Japan's own threat perceptions during the 1970s. The Nakasone government's embrace of sea lane defence as a rationale for alliance cooperation and



force modernisation is then explored, with an analysis of Japan's involvement in the 'Tanker War' during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq conflict.

### **I. Suzuki's sea lane defence 'pledge'.**

On May 8, 1981, following his summit meeting with President Ronald Reagan in Washington, Prime Minister Suzuki gave a press conference at the National Press Club. Asked about the extent of Japan's defence commitments, Suzuki stated:

"It is natural for Japan to defend its surrounding waters, which is (sic) our country's back-yard. We will strengthen our defence capability in order to defend several hundred miles of surrounding waters and the sea lanes to a distance of 1,000 nautical miles"<sup>1</sup>.

The reference to defending sea lanes out to 1,000 nm attracted immediate attention from US officials. The Joint Communiqué released earlier, while affirming a Japanese commitment to boost defence efforts in surrounding sea and airspace, had not included any attempt to define Japan's defence responsibilities beyond the extent of its territory. While Suzuki subsequently denied having made anything beyond a non-binding statement of intent at the press conference, the 'Suzuki pledge' propelled the issue of sea lane defence to the political forefront of alliance cooperation and Japan's defence policy over the following decade. In this process, changes in US strategy since the late 1960s provided the catalyst for a corresponding shift in Japanese perceptions.

### **II. Shifts in US strategy.**

Shifts in US strategy and the relative decline of US power from the late 1960s onwards led to an increase in burden-sharing pressure upon Japan in which naval cooperation and sea lane defence emerged as key priorities. During the late 1960s, assumptions about the economic and military superiority of the United States that had underpinned *Pax Americana* were progressively challenged. A perceived decline in US power, as demonstrated by the failure to achieve a military victory in Vietnam, was judged in strategic terms against the Soviet Union and also economically vis-à-vis US allies in Europe and Asia. Popular and Congressional opposition to the war in Vietnam, feeding into the 1973 War Powers Act, also raised questions, political willingness aside, about the legal freedom of US policymakers to conduct future armed interventions overseas.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sekai Keizai Johou Service, *Japanese-American Relations and Comprehensive Security*, Research Institute for Peace and Security, Tokyo, 1986, p 15; and Watanabe Akio (ed.), *Sengo Nihon no Shushōtachi* (Japan's Postwar Prime Ministers), Chuo Kōronsha, Tokyo, 1995, p 327.

The Nixon Doctrine, announced in Guam in July 1969, was designed to lessen the burden of US troop commitments across Asia by encouraging Washington's allies to assume the "primary responsibility" of providing the manpower for their defence. Apart from a sizeable Army commitment to be maintained in South Korea, the US post-Vietnam military presence in East Asia was henceforth to be re-configured to an 'offshore' strategy reliant on forward-deployed air and sea power, for which the predominantly Japan-based US Seventh Fleet would be the crux. The shift from a 'two-and-a-half war' to a 'one-and-a-half war' force-sizing concept was accompanied by a major drawdown of US conventional forces in Asia<sup>2</sup>. While US allies in Asia would have to contribute more towards their conventional defence under the Nixon Doctrine, Washington would continue exclusively to provide strategic nuclear deterrence to its allies in the region. Outlining his Strategy of Realistic Deterrence, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird wrote in 1971 that "we do not intend to be the policeman of the world ... it is realistic and more effective that the burden of protecting peace and freedom should be shared more fully by our allies and friends". Noting that "in escort ships, our friends and allies around the world possess a greater number than we do", Laird stated:

Therefore it is one of our goals for the 1970s that our Atlantic and Pacific allies should provide a major contribution to protecting the convoys that in war would be carrying material for their sustenance<sup>3</sup>.

Also underlying the Nixon administration's willingness to reduce US military commitments on the Asian continent was its recognition of the Sino-Soviet split. Exposure of the split paved the way for the Nixon administration's diplomatic opening to China in 1971, which exploded the founding premise of pre-Vietnam strategy for the Far East, which had been based on the containment of a monolithic Communist threat. For the remainder of the Cold War, US-China relations would increasingly take on the character of a quasi-alliance against the Soviet Union, while the diversion of Soviet conventional and nuclear strength to counter China helped to transform the US strategic position positively in Asia and globally. Even as the perceived threat of monolithic communism receded and relations with the Soviet Union warmed during the Détente period, US military planners became progressively concerned that the nuclear and conventional balance was tilting in Moscow's favour. A rise in Soviet political influence in the Middle East, East Africa and Southeast Asia was seen to be backed by a

<sup>2</sup> Robert Komer, *Maritime Strategy or Coalition Defense?*, University Press of America/Abt Books, Lanham, 1984, p 16.

<sup>3</sup> James E. Auer, 'Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force: An Appropriate Maritime Strategy?', *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 24, No.4, December 1971, p 16.



growing ability to project conventional forces and to conclude basing agreements. As a result, areas previously thought of as discrete regions of Cold War confrontation and proxy conflicts came to be regarded as inter-related military 'theatres' of global superpower competition.

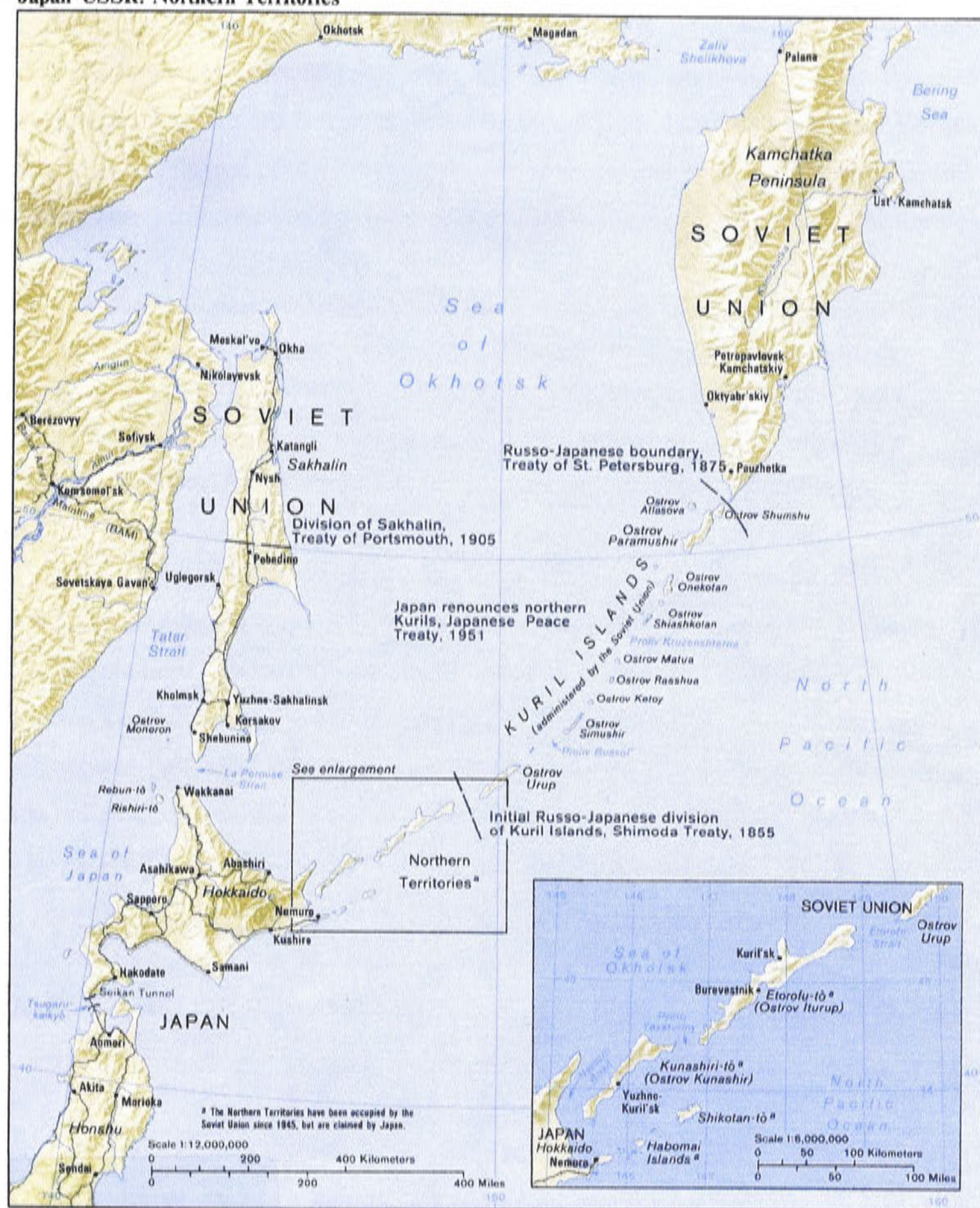
Within the US Pacific Command, concern at the modernisation of Soviet strategic and conventional forces in the Far East was accentuated by the post-Vietnam retrenchment of US conventional forces in Asia and declining defence budgets<sup>4</sup>. Soviet naval power projection was noted with particular alarm in the predominantly maritime environment. Beginning in the early 1970s, *Delta*-class nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) capable of launching long-range Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs) on the Continental United States from Soviet waters were introduced into the Northern and Pacific fleets. Under the 'bastion' concept, Soviet long-range ballistic missile submarines were deployed to adjoining semi-enclosed seas in order to take advantage of natural geography that lent itself to the creation of layered air and sea defences designed to protect a Soviet second-strike capability against US counter-measures<sup>5</sup>. The Soviet Pacific Fleet, charged with establishing an eastern bastion (to complement the primary Barents Sea bastion of the Northern Fleet) in the remote Sea of Okhotsk (see Map 7, below), expanded at a faster rate than the other Soviet fleets. Its aggregate tonnage rose from around 700,000 tons to 1,200,000 tons between 1967 and 1976, including some 40 nuclear-powered submarines<sup>6</sup>. Defences layered concentrically around the Sea of Okhotsk bastion included radar and acoustic surveillance sites installed on Sakhalin and the Kuriles and the forward basing of a MiG-23 interceptor squadron and an anti-ship missile battery on three of the four islands disputed with Japan.

<sup>4</sup> 'An Interview with CINCPAC, Admiral Robert L. J. Long', *Sea Power*, Vol. 26, No. 8, July 1983.

<sup>5</sup> Geoffrey Jukes, *Russia's Military and the Northern Territories Issue*, SDSC Working Paper No. 227, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1993, pp 7-9.

<sup>6</sup> The Soviet Pacific Fleet was assigned responsibility for 35 per cent of the Soviet strategic submarine force and the second most important strategic mission in the Soviet Navy. However, according to Captain Nakanishi Kenji, the Soviet Pacific Fleet acquired new models only 2-3 years after these had been



**Map 7: The Sea of Okhotsk and the Northern Territories/Southern Kuriles****Japan-USSR: Northern Territories**

Source: CIA/University of Texas.

In addition to the build-up of Soviet attack submarines, the potential threat from long-range strike aviation operating from airfields in the Soviet Far East from the mid-1970s onwards came to dominate US naval threat perceptions in the Pacific<sup>7</sup>. The aerial threat to US aircraft carriers was rendered more acute once the Tu-22M *Backfire*, with a

introduced into the Northern Fleet. (Interview with Capt Nakanishi Kenji, Research Department, Maritime Staff College, March 4, 2002).



supersonic combat radius of 1,000 nm and armed with the Kh-22 *Kitchen* long-range anti-ship cruise missile, began overflying the Sea of Japan and conducting simulated runs on US carrier battle groups, “adding a new dimension to the threat to the sea lanes in this area”<sup>8</sup>. By the mid-1970s, US Chief of Naval Operations James L. Holloway was warning Congress that the Soviet maritime build-up in the Far East meant that US sea lines of communication (SLOC) west of Hawaii could no longer be guaranteed<sup>9</sup>. Similar concerns were expressed by Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Admiral Maurice Weisner:

‘The gradual expansion of the Soviet navy has coincided with an ebb in the American ability to expand its efforts on the front lines of the western Pacific to an all-time low. In the event of emergency, there is probably only a fifty-fifty chance that the United States would be able to supply and communicate with American troops in Asia and the Pacific in the initial stages of war’<sup>10</sup>.

The Soviet Union’s involvement in the Horn of Africa and increased Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean, including access to the Yemeni port of Aden, suggested to US naval planners that the Soviet Union intended to develop “unprecedented power-projection capability into the Pacific and Indian Ocean regions ... aimed at developing a two-front war-fighting capability in Europe and East Asia”<sup>11</sup>. To increase its coverage of the Indian Ocean, where Soviet naval activities had increased steadily since 1968, the US Navy developed a variant of its strategy to ‘swing’ naval forces from the Pacific to the Atlantic. While responsibility for the Arabian Sea was shared between the Mediterranean-based Sixth Fleet and the Pacific-based Seventh Fleet, this burden fell disproportionately on the Seventh Fleet during the closure of the Suez Canal, in 1967-75.

Even as Seventh Fleet responsibilities were being extended, the fleet was being cut back to pre-Vietnam levels, based around two aircraft carrier battle groups, totalling 550,000 tons<sup>12</sup>. By 1982, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger reported to Congress that US naval force levels in the Pacific had fallen to around half their level in 1965<sup>13</sup>. During the 1970s, several international crises in the Indian Ocean basin prompted reactive

<sup>7</sup> From the 1960s onwards, US carrier battle groups transiting the Pacific were regularly intercepted by pairs of Tu-95 bombers, in an area referred to as the ‘Bear Box’, extending approximately 1,000 nm east of Japan.

<sup>8</sup> CINCPAC Admiral Robert Long, Address to the Navy League, October 28, 1982, USIS Official Text, December 3, 1982.

<sup>9</sup> Cited in ‘An Interview with CINCPAC, Admiral Robert L. J. Long’, *Sea Power*, Vol. 26, No. 8, July 1983.

<sup>10</sup> Statement by Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Admiral Maurice Weisner, *Asahi Shimbun*, August 28, 1978.

<sup>11</sup> Herbert Lee, ‘US Stresses Allies Roles in Sea Lane Security’, USICA Backgrounder, November 9, 1982.

<sup>12</sup> Fred Ikle, US Under Secretary of Defense for Policy; statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 10 June, 1982; USICA Official Text, June 15, 1982.

<sup>13</sup> Report of the Secretary of Defense to the Congress FY 1983 Budget, February 8, 1982, II-30.

deployments of US carrier battle groups through the Straits of Malacca, including the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War, the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Most importantly of all, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the end of 1979 was seen by some Western strategists as evidence of Soviet intentions to fulfil the czarist-era objective of acquiring an outlet onto the Indian Ocean. By the spring of 1980, when Iran and Iraq were also at war, the United States had two carrier battle groups deployed around the Arabian Sea and was upgrading logistic support facilities on the mid-Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia in support of a semi-permanent naval presence in the region.

With the withdrawal of most UK forces west of Suez, Washington believed that of its allies in the Pacific, only Australia and Japan were capable of counting in the naval balance. Fearing that the stretching of Seventh Fleet coverage to the Arabian Sea had left gaps in US military coverage of the Western Pacific, the Pentagon looked particularly to Japan, highly dependent on Middle Eastern oil and owner of the largest merchant fleet in the world, to contribute naval forces directly to Indian Ocean patrols or to compensate locally for the reduced Seventh Fleet presence around Japanese waters. US references to Japan's security stake in the Indian Ocean are evident as far back as Defense Secretary Laird's comments in March 1971 that:

The Russians have a greater (Indian Ocean) presence there than we do. It is of concern to the US of course. It should also be of interest to Japan, and I have told the Japanese that it should be so<sup>14</sup>.

By 1975, US officials had narrowed their preference for Japanese defence cooperation to three functions in the Northwest Pacific, namely:

- securing maritime transportation;
- strengthening antisubmarine warfare (ASW) capability; and
- improving air defence<sup>15</sup>.

In addition to invoking Japan's dependence on the security of its oil routes through the Indian Ocean as a means to pressure Tokyo to boost its level of maritime defence capability, US officials also expressed concern at the failure of the MSDF to meet its

---

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Bhabani Sen Gupta, T.T. Poulse, Hemlata Bhatia, *The Malacca Straits and the Indian Ocean: A Study of the Strategic and Legal Aspects of a Controversial Sea-lane*, Macmillan, New Delhi, 1974, pp 63-64.

<sup>15</sup> *Asahi Shimbun*, August 27, 1975.



procurement targets under the Fourth Defense Build-up Plan. These remained frozen under fiscal austerity controls imposed by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) at 45 escort ships, 15 submarines and 40 mine-sweepers. Based on a Japan Defense Agency (JDA) 1974 estimate of Soviet Pacific Fleet strength (at 8 cruisers, 54 destroyers, 31 nuclear and 63 diesel submarines), the Maritime Staff Office believed that the MSDF had less than half the level of ASW capability required to secure sea areas around Japan. The director of the JDA's Defence Policy Bureau, Maruyama Subaru, stated in April 1975 that "even if the MSDF's four escort fleets are modernised, and ... reach 250,000 tons, it is difficult to expect them to ensure perfection in the protection of maritime transport in the sea areas around our country"<sup>16</sup>. ASW exercises conducted off Oshima in that year also reportedly exposed shortcomings in the MSDF's ASW operations<sup>17</sup>.

Despite the close personnel linkages and regular bilateral exercises between the MSDF and US Navy, no formal framework for bilateral defence cooperation existed. In its absence, consultations described as study meetings were held between senior US and Japanese staff officers in late 1974 and January 1975 to discuss an operational framework for defence cooperation in the event of an "emergency". Participants included the Chairman of the SDF Joint Staff Council and the Commander of US Forces, Japan<sup>18</sup>. US military officials proposed that the MSDF should "share, together with the US Navy, the defense of the maritime transportation line, which is the life-line for the Japanese economy"<sup>19</sup>. In May 1975, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General George Brown testified to Congress highlighting US expectations that Japan should raise the level of its ASW capability, Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger suggested that Japan should make the protection of sea lanes a priority in addition to territorial defence<sup>20</sup>. With the memory of the 1973 Oil Crisis still fresh, US statements began to achieve the desired effect on key figures within Japan's ruling party, with Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Vice-Secretary Shiina declaring:

"Most of Japan's resources, in the case of oil 99 per cent (sic) pass from the Persian Gulf through the Indian Ocean through the Malacca and then Taiwan Strait on their way to Japan. Any minor disruption, even an isolated terrorist incident, would have a major impact on Japan's energy picture. Defence is not limited to territorial

<sup>16</sup> *Asahi Shimbun*, April 2, 1975, p 3.

<sup>17</sup> *Yomiuri Shimbun*, August 29, 1975.

<sup>18</sup> *Asahi Shimbun*, August 24, 1975.

<sup>19</sup> *Mainichi Shimbun*, August 27, 1975, p 1.

<sup>20</sup> Tsunoda Jun, 'Japanese Security Problems and Perspectives in the Late 1970s', *Orbis*, Vol. 24, No. 3, Fall 1975, pp 884-885.

integrity alone. We must also consider how to defend Japan's interests as they exist in tankers at sea"<sup>21</sup>.

Opposition parties expressed concerns that as a result of increasing foreign pressure (*gaiatsu*), MSDF and Air Self Defense Forces (ASDF) capabilities would not only be increased, but that escort operations could be extended geographically far beyond territorial waters, raising constitutional questions over overseas dispatch. Following reports that high-level military-to-military consultations had taken place, in March 1975, Ueda Tetsuo, a Socialist member of the House of Representatives, alleged in the Diet that a "secret agreement", under which Japan would take responsibility for sea lanes connecting the joint naval base at Yokosuka with Hawaii, Guam and the Philippines, had been concluded between military officers from both countries<sup>22</sup>. JDA Director General Sakata Michita denied the existence of a secret agreement, admitting only that the JDA had promoted studies on Japan-US cooperation concerning the defence of the sea areas around Japan<sup>23</sup>. Ueda's question nonetheless prompted Sakata to consider an official framework for bilateral defence cooperation with the United States, based on "the premise of the general command of the seas by the US Navy Seventh Fleet, upon establishing a concept for defense in the sea areas around our country". Sakata's interest in deepening the consultative institutional framework of the Alliance also reflected his concern to prevent SDF personnel from "going it alone" with their US counterparts and circumventing Japan's system of civilian control.

As part of Sakata's initiative, James Schlesinger was invited to Tokyo for a bilateral defence summit in Tokyo on August 29, setting in motion a process that would culminate in the drafting of the US-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines, released in November 1978. The importance of sea lanes was reflected in the text of the 1978 Guidelines, which stated that the MSDF and US Navy would "jointly conduct maritime operations for the defence of surrounding waters and sea lines of communication". Although the Guidelines were not subject to Diet approval and no geographical limitation was placed upon sea lane defence, mention of the MSDF's co-responsibility for defending sea lanes was especially significant in light of the fact that reference to defending sea lanes had been left out of the 1976 *taikō*, the government's defence policy outline.

<sup>21</sup> *Asahi Shimbun*, August 29, 1975.

<sup>22</sup> *Yomiuri Shimbun*, April 2, 1975.

<sup>23</sup> *Yomiuri Shimbun*, April 3, 1975, p 2.



Meanwhile, US political pressure on Tokyo to increase its levels of defence spending began to intensify. In the month that the Guidelines were released, a senior Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee visiting Tokyo, Congressman Richard Wright, said that Japan's dependence on sea lanes was "above all other nations in the Far East", and that accordingly Japan should do more to "defend its sea lanes for shipping"<sup>24</sup>. During his visit to Japan in late 1978, Defense Secretary Harold Brown reaffirmed Washington's desire to see improvements to Japan's level of air defence and ASW capability<sup>25</sup>. During JDA Director Kanemaru Shin's visit to Washington in August 1978, Brown had warned that a *Minsk*-class vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) carrier was likely to be deployed by the Soviet Pacific Fleet in 1979 and told Kanemaru that America's naval power alone "will not be sufficient to cope with the Soviet Navy in the Far East". Regarding the third area of cooperation identified in 1975, the protection of shipping, Brown urged Japan to take responsibility for guarding 'branch' sea lanes extending from its Pacific ports to the seas north of the Philippines and said that the United States expected the MSDF to acquire the capability to protect shipping along a southwesterly axis -- in the direction of Taiwan -- and southeast, towards the Bonin islands<sup>26</sup>. In return, it was affirmed that in a crisis the US Navy would secure routes across the central Pacific used to transport Middle Eastern oil and other materials (if necessary deploying its entire Pacific-based carrier force of six carrier battle groups)<sup>27</sup>.

The protection of shipping along the *nantō* and *nansei kōrotai* thus emerged at the centre of a debate within the Alliance about whether to define and apportion military roles on a geographical or functional basis. Although Kanemaru was personally supportive of an enhanced role for the MSDF in alliance cooperation, for example backing its participation in the biannual Rim of the Pacific Exercises (RIMPAC), the Japanese government was reluctant to commit the SDF to new territorial responsibilities. However, at the military level, MSDF officers' awareness of and interest in Japan's potential involvement in defending branch sea lanes in the Pacific had been expressed in a MSDF training manual as far back as 1970, which had stated:

It will be difficult to determine whether the enemy will choose coastal routes or ocean ones to attack. The latter are generally considered more important since they provide logistic support to the US military bases in Japan and supply necessary materials to the Japanese people as well as because larger vessels traverse these

<sup>24</sup> *Tokyo Shimbun*, November 16, 1978, p 2.

<sup>25</sup> *Yomiuri Shimbun*, November 16, 1978, p 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, July 3, 1978.

<sup>27</sup> *Yomiuri Shimbun*, July 2, 1978.

routes. In any case, the routes Japan wants to secure must be effectively connected with the US Central Pacific sea lanes of communication (LOC). This sea lane is to be set up in wartime as a logistic support route from the US to the far East and Australia. Effective linkage with the LOC will be the main objective of our sea lane concept<sup>28</sup>.

### **III. Japan's rising profile in US strategy.**

#### **1. Military-strategic pressures.**

Even as the United States showed interest at the political level in broadening the geographical extent of Japan's defence responsibilities under the rubric of sea lane defence, its naval strategy against the Soviet Union was evolving towards a more offensive posture in the Pacific, in which Japan's active cooperation was deemed crucial.

In June 1979, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Thomas Hayward said:

An extremely large number of warships would be required to protect convoys operating over the long maritime transport routes. The United States Navy has instead adopted an offensive approach to push the enemy into a defensive position. The United States Navy and the Maritime Self Defense Force coordinate so that they do not duplicate each other's efforts. This enables American warships to operate independently. The Maritime SDF's antisubmarine P-3Cs are deployed so as to fulfill this duty<sup>29</sup>.

Of the Soviet Union's Far Eastern naval bases, only the submarine base at Petropavlosk -- on the Kamchatkan peninsula -- enjoyed unrestricted access to the Pacific. However, lacking overland transport links, Petropavlosk was dependent upon other Soviet bases in the Sea of Japan and the Sea of Okhotsk for re-supply by sea and air from the main Soviet naval base at Vladivostok, facing the Sea of Japan. Japan's geostrategic position as a natural sea-air cordon around the major Soviet bases in the Sea of Japan, as noted in Chapters Two and Four, was described by Admiral Holloway in Congressional testimony as providing "the most definitive military justification for a strong security relationship with Japan".

<sup>28</sup> Nishijima Ryoichi. 'Participation of Maritime Self-Defense Forces in RIMPAC', *Asia Pacific Community*, No. 7, Winter 1980, pp 46-47.

<sup>29</sup> Maeda Tetsuo, *The Hidden Army: the Untold Story of Japan's Military Forces*, Edition Q, Inc., Chicago, 1995, p 234.



According to Holloway, the strategic priorities of the US Navy throughout the Pacific Command could be reduced to protecting its base facilities and essential lines of communication in the Pacific and Indian Ocean:

“The success of this strategic concept depends to a large degree on the ability of the United States and its allies to block the exits to the Sea of Japan and bottle up the Vladivostok-based Russian fleet units; and the utilisation of Japanese air bases as a barrier against the movement of Soviet long-range aircraft from their bases in the Vladivostok complex to the shipping lanes of the Pacific Ocean.”

Holloway noted further that “it is only with the assistance of the Japanese, operating as a military ally, that the Japanese straits can be effectively denied to the Soviets, and Russian long-range aviation prevented from overflying the Japanese archipelago”<sup>30</sup>. Similarly, Under-Secretary of Defense for Policy and Plans Robert Komer concluded that closing the straits would be difficult to achieve “without active Japanese cooperation”<sup>31</sup>.

Accompanying the abandonment of the ‘swing’ concept from 1979, the concept of ‘horizontal escalation’ emerged as part of the US Navy’s development of a new maritime strategy to underpin its global force posture vis-à-vis the Soviet Union (see Chapter Two). Although contested by those within the Department of Defense who viewed the emphasis on offensive pre-emption within horizontal escalation as destabilising, the concept called for US Pacific-based forces -- in the event of a Soviet-led offensive in the Middle East or Western Europe -- to open up a new theatre of operations and mount reprisal strikes against Soviet Far Eastern bases. This was based on a calculation that the vulnerable disposition of Soviet military infrastructure in the Far East together with US strengths in mobility, concentrated strike power and geostrategic position in the Western Pacific, would enable US forces to wage a (sub-nuclear) conflict on favourable terms<sup>32</sup>. Operationally, the concept depended on the forward-positioned strike units of the Seventh Fleet, including carrier-based aviation as well as the recently introduced *Tomahawk* cruise missile, which greatly complicated the Soviet defence planning environment by extending a strategic strike potential to all US

<sup>30</sup> Testimony of Admiral James L. Holloway before the US Congress, Hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, East-West Relations: Focus on the Pacific, 97th Congress, 2nd Session. June 16, 1982, pp 53-54.

<sup>31</sup> Robert Komer, *Maritime Strategy or Coalition Defense?*, University Press of America/Abt Books, Lanham, 1984, p 87.

<sup>32</sup> Harold C. Hinton, ‘The United States and Extended Security Commitments: East Asia’, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, No. 457, September 1981, p 99.

principal surface combatants and submarines<sup>33</sup>. According to John F. Lehman, President Reagan's first Secretary of the Navy, by building up US naval forces in the north Pacific the United States "signalled to the Soviets that if they attacked NATO Europe they could expect to see us coming at them in the Pacific"<sup>34</sup>. However, to be fully credible, horizontal escalation required not only Japan's passive acquiescence as a basing platform, but its active military cooperation by providing air defence over the Japanese archipelago and in closing the main egress points from the Sea of Japan.

## 2. Political-economic pressures.

In addition to strategic reasons for pursuing defence cooperation, other factors in the political economy of US-Japan relations inclined Washington to apply increasing pressure on Tokyo to boost its defence spending from the late 1970s. The first stirrings of trade tension over soya beans in the early 1970s had, by 1980, become fully fledged disputes about automobile exports. This fanned Congressional charges that Japan was 'free-riding' on the US security guarantee in the same year that its bilateral trade surplus surpassed the symbolic watershed of \$10 billion. Among major US allies, Japan stood out conspicuously as posting the largest bilateral trade surplus yet devoting the smallest proportion of national wealth to defence. The dominance of trade and security issues in US-Japan relations made policy linkages unavoidable, at least in Congress, in spite of the efforts of officials on both sides to separate economic ties from defence relations<sup>35</sup>.

Statements by senior US officials on Japan began to take on an increasingly combative tenor towards the end of the Carter presidency. Secretary of Defense Harold Brown complained of Japanese "complacency" over defence, describing the Japanese government's plan to boost the defence budget by 7.6 per cent for fiscal 1981 as insufficient<sup>36</sup>. US irritation with Tokyo intensified after the Iranian revolution, following the disclosure that all six major Japanese trading houses were continuing to purchase Iranian oil, heedless of a US request for its allies to join an economic embargo in retaliation for the seizure of the US embassy and its staff in Teheran<sup>37</sup>. Under-Secretary of Defense for Strategy and Plans Robert Komer, visiting Japan in September 1980, impressed upon JDA Director General Omura Joji the connection between Japan's

<sup>33</sup> Paul Keal, *Japan's Role in United States Strategy in the Pacific*, Working Paper No. 106, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1986.

<sup>34</sup> John F. Lehman Jr, *Command of the Sea*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1988, p 404.

<sup>35</sup> See for example, Michael Armacost's account of US attempts to sell the AWACs aircraft to Japan: Armacost, Michael H. *Friends or Rivals?: the Insider's Account of U.S.-Japan Relations*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1996, p 89.

<sup>36</sup> "Japan's Budget for Arms Seen as Inadequate", *New York Times*, December 31, 1980, p 1.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Ambassador Okazaki Hisahiko, Okazaki Institute, Tokyo, 1999, March 12, 1999.



dependence on US naval protection in the Middle East and US interest in boosting SDF efforts in the Pacific:

'The defense of the sea lanes is a problem of life and death importance for the western nations. Japan benefits most from the maintenance of the sea lanes ... only the US can defend. It will deploy its Seventh fleet in the Indian Ocean to fulfill this responsibility. Naturally, the defense of the area around Japan will be weakened. Japan too, should recognise these circumstances and strengthen its defense power'<sup>38</sup>.

### 3. 'Roles and Missions'.

The failure of the Carter administration, despite harsh rhetoric, to persuade the Japanese government significantly to raise defence budgets prompted a rethink among incoming officials of the Reagan administration in January 1981. The Republican administration came to power with two basic objectives for Japan policy: first, to maintain Japan's Western orientation; and secondly, to obtain "a more equitable burden-sharing arrangement"<sup>39</sup>. Although these were similar to the policy objectives of the Carter administration, Reagan officials including Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asia Richard Armitage and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger shared the view that it was counter-productive to criticise an ally publicly. Moreover, they agreed that maintaining a focus on achieving abstract budgetary targets in the absence of an accompanying strategic rationale was unlikely to persuade a reluctant ally facing significant domestic opposition to further defence commitments<sup>40</sup>. With the Defense Cooperation Guidelines already in place, a new strategy was suggested of assigning 'roles and missions' within the Alliance which, when linked to corresponding target capabilities, would supply their own strategic rationale for increased funding.

Although Haig is credited with coining the phrase 'roles and missions', the original architect of the approach was the Special Assistant for Japan of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Commander James Auer, who had studied at the National Defense Academy in Yokosuka in 1970. In addition to his extensive knowledge of the MSDF, Auer had actively maintained military and political contacts in Japan. Personal links, especially those between officers from the two navies, were to play a key role in the

<sup>38</sup> *Asahi Shimbun*, October 5, 1980, p 2.

<sup>39</sup> Richard Armitage and Karl D. Jackson, "U.S. Strategic Interests in East Asia and the Pacific", *Asian Pacific Defense Forum*, Spring 1988, Vol. 12, No. 4 pp 39-40.

decision-making process surrounding sea lane defence in the 1980s. As a result of the personal network Auer had built up while an officer studying at Yokosuka, and particularly his friendship with the former MSDF Chief of Staff, Kimura Hideo, Auer was able to consult informally with other former MSDF chiefs, Uchida Kazutomi and Nakamura Teijiro, and via these channels contact Oga Ryōhei the incumbent Chief of Staff. In Washington, close navy-to-navy links extended to Japan's Defence Attaché, Kawamura Sumihiko, a former P-3C pilot and intelligence officer, and another long-time associate of Auer. As a result, Kawamura was able to make regular, unscheduled calls to the Japan office in the Pentagon --- in contrast with the more formally observed relations between counterpart personnel from the other services<sup>41</sup>.

In February 1981, Armitage visited Japan unofficially with Auer as part of the Reagan administration's preliminary review of security policy towards Japan. Armitage met and exchanged opinions with Tanba Minoru, who was in charge of alliance relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), JDA Councillor for Foreign Relations Okazaki Hisahiko, who was seconded from the MOFA, Shiina Mōto, the deputy head of the LDP's Policy Research Committee, and Kimura. The concept of a division of labour based on sharing roles and missions was tentatively broached, whereby the MSDF would adopt as its operational focus ASW, minesweeping and pursue the capability to block Soviet naval access to the Sōya (La Perouse), Tsugarū and Tsushima (Korea) straits, thus enabling the US Navy to concentrate on offensive operations (see Map 1).

After returning to the United States, Armitage and Auer submitted a memorandum to Weinberger outlining roles and missions for the SDF and US military, areas of responsibility in sea and air defence, and the estimated forces needed to achieve these missions. At this time, US Ambassador Mike Mansfield sent a cable to Washington requesting clarification of the new administration's policy on the US-Japan Security Treaty and bilateral trade issues as soon as possible. With Haig in favour of a less confrontational approach to alliance relations, the memorandum on roles and missions became accepted as the foundation of the first Reagan administration's Japan policy on security matters.

The new US administration officially pressed its case in March 1981, when Foreign Minister Ito Masayoshi visited Washington in preparation for the leaders' summit in

---

<sup>40</sup> Sekai Keizai Johou Service, *Japanese-American Relations and Comprehensive Security*, Research Institute for Peace and Security, Tokyo, 1986, p 11.

<sup>41</sup> Agawa Naoyuki, *Umi no Yūjō*, Chuō Kōronsha, Tokyo, 2001, pp 210-20.



May. Weinberger indicated interest in obtaining Japanese cooperation to defend sea areas “west of Guam and north of the Philippines”<sup>42</sup>. However, Ito responded that this might contravene the cabinet-level ban on the exercise of collective self-defence and gave a commitment only to reply later, subject to further discussions<sup>43</sup>. In the build-up to Suzuki’s visit in May, Washington’s roles and missions agenda for the SDF crystallised into three key objectives:

1. To establish sea control within a fan-shaped area of the Northwest Pacific extending south of the main Japanese islands, east of the Philippines and west of Guam. Within this area the focus would be on countering Soviet submarines and *Backfire* bombers.
2. To build the capability, including mine warfare, to blockade the Sōya, Tsugarū and Tsushima straits.
3. To establish an air defence screen over Japanese territory and part of the Sea of Japan to defend against Soviet fighters and bombers.

Owing to its proximity to the Soviet Far East and the decision (approved in late 1977) to acquire the F-15, Japan -- Washington believed -- would be able to accomplish the second and third missions without projecting military forces beyond its air defence zone. However, the first objective entailed an unambiguous geographical expansion of Japan’s defence zone, potentially with major implications both for the SDF’s force structure and conformity with the ban on collective self-defence. According to the Congressional Researcher Larry Niksch, in the zone within which Washington wanted Japan to take primary responsibility for sea control, specific MSDF tasks were to include the convoying of merchant shipping to Japan, as well as “effective offensive and defensive capabilities against Soviet submarines, surface ships and aircraft over a wide ocean area”<sup>44</sup>.

During 1980, the policy-making environment in Japan was particularly sensitive to US pressure. Okazaki Hisahiko, who was at that time involved in drafting speeches in the Diet in his capacity as JDA Councillor for Foreign Relations, recalls that US frustration concerning Japan’s defence spending levels, increased security concerns prompted by

<sup>42</sup> Sekai Keizai Johou Service, *Japanese-American Relations and Comprehensive Security*, Research Institute for Peace and Security, Tokyo, 1986, p 17.

<sup>43</sup> Agawa Naoyuki, *Umi no Yūjō*, Chuō Kōronsha, Tokyo, 2001, p 217-218.

<sup>44</sup> ‘Defence Burden-Sharing in the Pacific: US expectations and Japanese Responses’, *Asian Affairs*, July/August, 1981, pp 333-34.

the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and annoyance over continuing Japanese oil purchases from Iran, combined to make the Foreign Ministry especially anxious to placate Washington through concessions on security issues<sup>45</sup>.

#### 4. RIMPAC participation.

As a major practical step towards deepening defence cooperation with the United States, in February 1980, the MSDF sent its first contingent to the month-long RIMPAC exercises, conducted off Hawaii. MSDF officers had sought Japanese participation at RIMPAC since the exercises started in 1971, but were unable to overcome opposition from the JDA's internal bureaux. However, the Schlesinger-Sakata meeting in August 1975 swung the environment in favour of bilateral defence cooperation. Yet it was not until 1979 that backing for RIMPAC from the JDA's civilian management was forthcoming, under Director General Kanemaru Shin and his successor Yamashita Ganri<sup>46</sup>. Although bilateral naval exercises dated back to the 1950s, RIMPAC, as a multilateral exercise focussed on a potential threat from the Soviet Union -- potentially placing MSDF units under US operational command -- presented the JDA with substantial legal obstacles. Negotiations to overcome these and more practical problems in the way of Japan's participation were conducted at the military level on the Japanese side by Captain Yoshida Manabu<sup>47</sup>. Eventually, a formula was arrived at that would allow the MSDF technically only to exercise on a bilateral level with US Navy units, as an extension of a joint US-Japan training programme dating from 1976. MSDF forces dispatched to RIMPAC in February 1980, under the command of Captain Yoshioka Tsutomu, were modest -- limited to the helicopter destroyer *Hiei*, the guided-missile destroyer *Amatsukaze* and a P-2J aircraft. However, RIMPAC nonetheless signified to contemporary observers "momentum for ... Japan's role in the joint defence of the Pacific sea lanes in the 1980s"<sup>48</sup>.

RIMPAC enabled the MSDF and US Navy to lay the groundwork for closer naval cooperation more than a year before the Reagan administration adopted roles and missions. According to Nishijima Ryoichi, during preparations for the exercise, MSDF operational planners were already focussing on a wedge-shaped area, "with the 20th parallel as its base and the Tokkaido megopolis (Tokyo-Nagoya-Osaka) as its vertex", within which the MSDF would assume primary responsibility for ASW, deploying its P-

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Ambassador Okazaki Hisahiko, Okazaki Institute, Tokyo, 1999, March 12, 1999.

<sup>46</sup> Agawa Naoyuki, *Umi no Yūjō*, Chuō Kōronsha, Tokyo, 2001, pp 220-25.

<sup>47</sup> Yoshida would become MSDF Chief of Staff in the 1990s.

<sup>48</sup> Nishijima Ryoichi, 'Participation of Maritime Self-Defense Forces in RIMPAC', *Asia Pacific Community*, No. 7, Winter 1980, pp 43-53.



3Cs to prevent Soviet submarines from encroaching “eastward across the Nansei Islands and westward across the Izu-Ogasawara Islands line”<sup>49</sup>. While this move towards adopting the defence of an area of sea space marked a departure from defending shipping directly, escorted convoys of merchant ships and tankers remained part of the MSDF’s operational plans. Based on estimates of the minimum level of economic imports needed during wartime, the concept called for the MSDF to assign its four flotillas (each composed of eight vessels) to escort convoys of around 50 merchant ships dispatched at the rate of eight per month, which would receive US naval protection as far as the 20th parallel. The 20th parallel roughly bisects the Bashi Channel between Taiwan and the Philippines, and runs close to Okino Tori Shima (Parace Vela), which marks the southernmost extent of Japanese territory on the eastern fringe of the Philippine Sea.

#### **IV. The Suzuki pledge and its aftermath.**

According to Okazaki, in 1979-80 an unprecedented latitude was extended to parliamentary debate on security and defence issues, enabling the use of previously taboo terms in the Diet, such as “potential threat”, vis-à-vis the Soviet Union<sup>50</sup>. In October 1980, on the heels of Komer’s highlighting of Japan’s dependence on US naval protection in the Middle East, Foreign Minister Ito stated before the House of Councillors Special Committee on Security:

Japan could not help but strive to build up its defence capabilities to a certain level now that the increased US naval presence in the Indian Ocean, designed to ensure peace and stability in the Middle East region and the West’s vital sea lanes there, has considerably reduced US military strength in Asia and the West Pacific.<sup>51</sup>

Ito’s statement, the most supportive of its kind to date, was followed by Prime Minister Suzuki’s appearance before the Committee on November 10, when he said that the SDF had the legal right “to defend Japanese shipping on the high seas if it is exposed to attack and other dangers”. Suzuki also stated that the MSDF’s target of assuring the security of waters for several hundred nm from Japanese coasts and the sea routes serving Japan for up to 1,000 nm from Japan remained unchanged but that the SDF were not capable of protecting Japanese vessels in the Gulf and Indian Ocean. This marked the first

<sup>49</sup> Nishijima Ryoichi, ‘Participation of Maritime Self-Defense Forces in RIMPAC’, *Asia Pacific Community*, No. 7, Winter 1980, pp 43-53.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Ambassador Okazaki Hisahiko, Okazaki Institute, Tokyo, March 12, 1999. JDA Director General Omura Joji stated before a Diet committee in 1980 that the Soviet military build-up constituted a “latent threat” (Matsumae Tatsuro. *The Limits of Defense: Japan as an Unsinkable Aircraft-Carrier*, Tōkai University Press, 1988, pp 125-26).

occasion in which a post-war prime minister had asserted the constitutionality of protecting Japan's sea lanes beyond the extent of its territorial waters<sup>52</sup>. According to Okazaki, the brief for Suzuki's inaugural visit to Washington was prepared with the objective of presenting Japan in the most positive light possible, by re-packaging existing policy statements that were already a matter of Diet record.

The Joint Communiqué issued at the conclusion of Suzuki's meeting with President Reagan in May 1981 included a recognition by both leaders of an "appropriate division of roles" in defence and that Japan would undertake to:

- defend Japan's territory and surrounding sea and air space;
- alleviate the financial burden of stationing US forces in Japan; and
- extend aid to strategically important regions.

In return, the United States affirmed that it would:

- extend nuclear protection to Japan;
- maintain offensive forces in and around Japan;
- retain forces in South Korea; and
- defend sea lanes in the Indian Ocean and southwest Pacific<sup>53</sup>.

While no significant Japanese defence policy concessions were contained in the Joint Communiqué, the reference to "alliance relations" (*dōmei kankei*) itself was groundbreaking and controversial in Japan, where official reference to the Security Treaty in such terms was still taboo. Controversy over the use of the term "alliance" in the official text eventually prompted Foreign Minister Ito's resignation. According to Okazaki -- who accompanied the premier to the United States -- Suzuki was unaware of the controversy generated either by the Joint Communiqué or his subsequent press conference until he read the Japanese press coverage of the summit on his return flight to Tokyo. Only at this point did Suzuki realise that his comments on sea lanes had been taken by Washington as an official policy commitment on the part of his administration.

With US officials believing they had won a public commitment from the prime minister to assume primary responsibility for the defence of sea areas out to 1,000 nm,

<sup>51</sup> 'LDP, DSP Agree Japan Needs Improved Defense Capabilities', *Japan Times*, October 25, 1980, p 1.

<sup>52</sup> 'SDF Could Legally Protect Sea Lanes, Ships if Capable: Suzuki', *Japan Times*, November 11, 1980, p 1.



Washington's attention shifted to the desired level of armament for Japan to discharge its expanded responsibilities. In June 1981, at the Thirteenth Security Subcommittee meeting in Hawaii, the US side floated a force modernisation proposal for the SDF that put forward quantitative targets significantly exceeding those stipulated in the 1976 *taikō* in several areas (Figure 14):

**Figure 14:** US force structure proposals at the 13th Security Subcommittee meeting

Main equipment	<i>Taikō</i>	US Proposal
Escort destroyers	60	70
Submarines	16	25
ASW patrol aircraft	100 (P-3C and P-2J)	125 (P-3C)
Air defence squadrons	10	14
Early Warning squadrons	2	1

Sources: Oga Ryohei, *Shiiren no Himitsu*, Shōbunsha, Tokyo, 1983, p 201; and Matsumae Tatsuro, *The Limits of Defense: Japan as an Unsinkable Aircraft-Carrier*, Tōkai University Press, 1988, p 138.

In addition to quantitative targets, the United States recommended boosting SDF readiness and sustainability levels, including a suggestion to build up a three-month supply of ammunition. Some Japanese observers have noted that the total of 70 destroyers put forward in the US proposal matched the MSDF's own recommendation for five escort flotillas outlined at the planning stages of the Basic Defense Force Concept, suggesting that MSDF officers may have fed their force structure preferences to their US Navy counterparts in Hawaii<sup>54</sup>. Given the closeness and informality of navy-to-navy ties, it seems highly likely that the US interlocutors at Hawaii would at least have been aware of the MSDF's preferences. At the same time, against increasing resistance from the Suzuki cabinet, US officials and senior officers were at pains to stress that an SDF role in sea lane security would not mean assuming a collective self-defence function, as "Japan's capability to defend her home islands, territorial sea and air space may ultimately rest on the security she can provide to the sea lines of

<sup>53</sup> Sekai Keizai Johou Service, *Japanese-American Relations and Comprehensive Security*, Research Institute for Peace and Security, Tokyo, 1986, pp 11-12.

<sup>54</sup> Katahara Eich, *The Politics of Japanese Defence Policy Making, 1975-1989*, unpublished PhD thesis, Griffith University, April 1990, p 215.

communications and the access they provide to the raw materials needed to sustain her in both peace and war”<sup>55</sup>.

Meanwhile, Suzuki had been angered by what he saw as a misrepresentation of his summit meeting with Reagan, during which the premier had stressed Japan’s pacifist credentials. After returning to Japan, Suzuki sought to distance himself from his comments on sea lane defence at the National Press Club, describing them as merely “a statement of a future objective” rather than an official commitment. Foreign Minister Ito’s successor, Sunoda Sunao, maintained equally that no geographical expansion of Japan’s defence responsibilities had been entered into<sup>56</sup>. Under pressure from those within the LDP, including Miyazawa Kiichi, who were worried at the fiscal implications of further defence commitments, the prime minister declared that strict constraints would be imposed on sea lane operations, “if such operations are to be carried out”<sup>57</sup>.

Nevertheless, the Reagan administration used the issues of sea lane defence to maintain pressure on Tokyo to increase its defence efforts. In February 1982, Caspar Weinberger told Congress that Japan could increase its contribution to regional stability by strengthening its air and sea defences “and providing protection to the sea lines of communication out to 1,000 miles”<sup>58</sup>. The following month, Weinberger suggested that the force structure outlined in the *taikō* could be achieved by 1990, requiring an annual increase in defence spending of 10 per cent in real terms. In July 1982, the Suzuki administration went some way towards meeting US expectations by raising the authorised total of P-3Cs to be acquired by the MSDF to 100 aircraft from 45, a measure that promised greatly to boost its ASW capabilities. By agreeing to more than double the numbers of *Orions* in its inventory, the MSDF’s ability to prevent the infiltration of Soviet submarines into the Northwest Pacific was greatly enhanced, with obvious implications for improving the operational environment of the US Seventh Fleet. However, the issue of how to fund accelerated acquisitions of the P-3C, F-15 and E-2C remained unresolved under Suzuki.

<sup>55</sup> Commander US Forces, Japan, Charles Donnelly, quoted by Herbert Lee, ‘US Stresses Allies Roles in Sea Lane Security’, USICA Backgrounder, November 9, 1982.

<sup>56</sup> Sekai Keizai Johou Service, *Japanese-American Relations and Comprehensive Security*, Research Institute for Peace and Security, Tokyo, 1986, p 15.

<sup>57</sup> Peter Woolley, *Japan’s Navy: Politics and Paradox, 1971-2000*, Lynne Reiner, Boulder, 2000, p 70; and Aurelia George, *The Nakasone Challenge: Historical Constraints and New Initiatives in Japan’s Defence Policy*, Legislative Research Service, The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Discussion Paper No. 2, 1987, p 11.

<sup>58</sup> Report of the Secretary of Defense to the Congress FY 1983 Budget, February 8, 1982, II-30.



In 1978, the JDA formulated the Mid-Term Defense Program Estimate (MTDPE), covering fiscal years 1980-84, as the first long-term procurement plan initiated under the *taikō*. Although intended to speed up completion of the *taikō* and subject to review after three years, the MTDPE was considered within government only to have the status of JDA 'internal reference material' and therefore was considered not binding on the MoF, which remained opposed to increased defence spending not least because it was attempting to rein in deficit financing by the LDP and maintain a balanced budget<sup>59</sup>. Without full government backing for the 1980-84 MTDPE or the revised version spanning 1983-87, the MoF was able to enforce cuts that led ultimately to the JDA's procurement objectives being barely half fulfilled. Although the United States interpreted the MoF's intervention as a setback in its efforts to raise Japan's defence spending, the political environment was to alter in Washington's favour under Suzuki's successor, Nakasone, who came to power in November 1982.

At the Fourteenth Security Subcommittee meeting convened at Hawaii in August, JDA interlocutors proposed that a dedicated study on sea lane defence be launched under the auspices of the Defense Cooperation Guidelines. Although initially welcomed by the US side, the JDA proposal reflected ambivalence towards sea lane defence within the JDA's internal bureaux among those who sought to delay any substantive commitments arising from Suzuki's 'pledge', by drawing out the length of the study (in a tried-and-tested JDA technique designed to demonstrate a response to US pressure without committing to substantive policy change). As a result, the study was not launched officially until March 1983, and did not report its findings to the Japanese cabinet until December 1986, before being submitted to the Security Consultative Committee in January 1987.

## **V. Japan's changing threat perceptions.**

The focus accorded to sea lane defence within Japan's defence policy during the 1980s reflected more than simply an *ad hoc* response to US pressure or opportunist attempts on the part of Japan's uniformed defence establishment to boost their legitimacy and budgetary claims. While both of these factors obtain, Japan's strategic concerns were also being remoulded during the 1970s. First, this was in response to a perceived diminished US military commitment to East Asia that was apparently confirmed in 1977 by President Carter's announcement that he intended to withdraw US ground forces from South Korea. Second, the build-up of Soviet military capabilities in the vicinity of

<sup>59</sup> Joseph P. Keddell, *The Politics of Defense in Japan: Managing Internal and External Pressures*, M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 1994, p 68.

Japan also caused mounting concern, both among Japanese politicians and defence planners. The *Report on Comprehensive National Security*, commissioned by Prime Minister Ohira Masayoshi in April 1979 reflected:

In considering the question of Japan's security, the most fundamental change in the international situation that took place in the 1970s is the termination of clear American supremacy in both military and economic spheres<sup>60</sup>.

In the wake of the US withdrawal from Vietnam, opposition parties began to moderate their position towards the Security Treaty and the SDF. Of the four main opposition parties, the Japan Socialist Party (JSP), the Japan Communist Party (JCP), Kōmeitō ('Clean Government' Party) and the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP -- a splinter party from the Socialists), both the Communists and Socialists had been committed to abrogating the Security Treaty since the 1950s and regarded the SDF as unconstitutional. For their part, both Kōmeitō and the DSP began to readjust their defence policy platforms in 1975. The DSP shifted from an insistence on ejecting US troops from Japan to recognising the "necessity" of the Security Treaty, while Kōmeitō softened its demand for an immediate abrogation of the Treaty, to doing so on the basis of mutual consent. While the Socialists refused to recognise the constitutionality of the SDF and used security policy to attack the government in the Diet (as exemplified by Ueda's questioning on sea lane defence), Party Chairman Narita Tōmei signalled a shift towards acceptance of the Security Treaty in a speech in December 1976. By 1981, Kōmeitō had recognised the SDF and put forward its own recommendations on the expansion of defence capability, passing a motion in September that recognised Moscow's build-up of the Soviet Pacific Fleet, its deployments to the Northern Territories and the invasion of Afghanistan as posing a security threat to Japan<sup>61</sup>. The DSP dropped its opposition to the Security Treaty and supported the creation of a standing security committee in the Diet in January 1981. Though the JSP continued to espouse unarmed neutrality, from November 1978, the party softened its opposition to the Security Treaty and shifted its policy on the territorial dispute with the Soviet Union to bring it in line with that of the LDP<sup>62</sup>.

<sup>60</sup> *Report on Comprehensive National Security* (Translation), Comprehensive National Security Study Group, July 2, 1980, p 7.

<sup>61</sup> However, the party only endorsed the development of a "water's edge" anti-invasion capability for the SDF (Joseph P. Keddell, *The Politics of Defense in Japan: Managing Internal and External Pressures*, M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 1994, pp 15-18, 92-100).

<sup>62</sup> Deng Xiaoping's pragmatic acceptance of the Security Treaty as part of China's normalisation with Japan further undercut the Socialists' position; James E Dornan and Diane S. Dornan, 'Japan: Domestic Factors', in James M. Roherty (ed.), *Defense Policy Formation: Towards Comparative Analysis*, University of South California, 1980, pp 203-18.



MOFA officials viewed the reinforcement of Soviet defences in the Northern Territories beginning in 1978 mainly as a reprisal for the inclusion of a 'non-hegemony' clause (implicitly directed at the Soviet Union) in the Japan-China normalisation treaty signed in August<sup>63</sup>. JDA analysts interpreted the Soviet move as driven by the military logic of turning the Sea of Okhotsk into an SSBN 'bastion', which might lead to pre-emptive Soviet attacks on Hokkaido or even northern Honshu in order to secure transit through the Sōya or Tsugarū straits<sup>64</sup>. The impression of hostile Soviet intentions was sealed by Moscow's conclusion of a friendship treaty and basing rights with Vietnam in November 1978, the deployment of SS-20s missiles to the Soviet Far East, and the invasion of Afghanistan.

The notion of a "military threat from the north" was given popular expression through a series of books and articles published in Japan around this time<sup>65</sup>. Ground Self Defense Forces (GSDF) Chief of Staff Kurisu Hiromi was forced to resign in 1978 after suggesting that without a framework of emergency legislation (*yūji hōsei*) "supra-legal" measures might be needed to respond to a military attack. In March 1979, Kurisu's successor, General Nagano, became the first figure publicly to raise revision of the *taikō* in light of the changing security environment, and in 1981 Chairman of the Joint Staff Council Takeda questioned the viability of Japan's 'defensive' defence policy<sup>66</sup>. Increased Soviet air activity in Japan's vicinity meanwhile saw the number of ASDF scrambles to intercept Soviet aircraft rise from 281 in 1975 to 939 in 1981.

Japanese sea lane threat perceptions and defence planning concepts were also evolving. Oga Ryōhei was MSDF Chief of Staff during the early 1980s. In *Shiiren no Himitsu* ('Sealane Secrets'), published in 1983, he divided the concept of sea lane security into separate economic and military components. Economically, he argued that seaborne trade underpinned Japan's prosperity, reflecting its large population, poor resource endowment and corresponding need to import raw materials and export valued-added manufactured goods. Militarily, maritime supply routes across the Atlantic and Pacific

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Ambassador Okazaki Hisahiko, Okazaki Institute, Tokyo, 1999, March 12, 1999.

<sup>64</sup> Nishimura Shigeki, "The Military Balance in Northeast Asia" IIGP Paper, 1991.

<sup>65</sup> See for example, Summaries of Selected Japanese magazines 1985, American Embassy, Political Section Office of Translation Services, Tokyo Maruyama Hiroyuki, *Shōkun*, 'Be Guarded Against Soviet Pacific Fleet', November 1985, pp 41-43; and Nakamura Kenichi, 'Extrication from Soviet Threat Argument', *Sekai*, April 1985, pp 20-26.

<sup>66</sup> Chapman, Drifte and Gow, *Japan's Quest for Comprehensive Security: Defence, Diplomacy, Dependence*. Frances Pinter, London, 1983, p 69; and Matsumae Tatsuro. *The Limits of Defense: Japan as an Unsinkable Aircraft-Carrier*, Tōkai University Press, 1988, p 108.

were deemed vital to US military strategy at a global level, and its ability to defend Japan from attack<sup>67</sup>.

Geographically, he identified three major sea lanes as crucial to Japan's economic security:

- the sea lane connecting Japan, via the Ryūkyū island chain, Bashi Channel and either the Straits of Malacca or Lombok, with Southeast Asia and the Middle East (accounting for 60 per cent of imports);
- a southeastern sea lane linking Japan with Oceania and Australasia, via the Ogasawara/Bonin islands (16 per cent of imports); and
- the 'great circle' route connecting Japan, across the Pacific, with North and South America (20 per cent of imports).

The importance Oga attached to the defence of sea lanes and a concomitant requirement for a navy capable of 'blue-water' operations bore resemblance to Sekino Hideo's blue-water vision. However, Oga's strategy -- drawing heavily from that articulated by the former MSDF Chief of Staff, Uchida Kazutomi, in the 1970s -- also differed in key respects. The vision of an autonomous navy still held an emotional appeal to many senior MSDF officers (many of whom, Oga included, were veterans of the Imperial Navy<sup>68</sup>) and certain nationalist politicians. However, by the beginning of the 1980s, MSDF plans were firmly premised on a functional division of labour defined by the ASW and mine-sweeping 'shield' provided by the SDF and the 'sword' wielded by US mobile strike power<sup>69</sup>. Oga thus stressed that the success of Japan's defensive efforts was dependent on maintaining close coordination with US forces.

Oga's proposed "total strategy" of sea lane defence incorporated the MSDF's anti-submarine efforts, led by P-3C aircraft and helicopter-equipped destroyers, air defence conducted by the ASDF, the blockade of Soviet egress points from the Sea of Japan as well as the direct protection of high-value units including supply ships and US aircraft carriers. The importance of boosting coordination and intelligence exchange with the

<sup>67</sup> Oga Ryōhei. *Shiiren no Himitsu*, Shōbunsha, Tokyo, 1983, pp 164-204.

<sup>68</sup> Oga graduated from military training November 1942 and participated in the Japanese withdrawal from the Aleutian island of Kiska before retraining and serving out the remainder of the war as a submariner. In August 1945, his mother and sister were both killed at Nagasaki. In 1950, he commanded an MSA minesweeping unit sent to Korean waters.

<sup>69</sup> Agawa Naoyuki. *Umi no Yūjō*, Chuō Kōronsha, Tokyo, 2001, p 216.



Maritime Safety Agency was also stressed, as by other JDA analysts<sup>70</sup>. From a military point of view, Oga emphasised the efficiency of closing the Sea of Japan, using the MSDF's submarines and mines, as a means to limit the potential Soviet threat posed to Japan's sea lanes. However, he also recognised that constitutional problems would be posed by the operational necessity to act pre-emptively in closing the straits in order to prevent a surge of Soviet naval vessels from the Sea of Japan. Moreover, by publicly committing itself to closing the straits, Japan carried a risk of increased tension with the Soviet Union, which might develop its own pre-emptive doctrine in order to secure transit through the Sōya Strait.

Assuming that a partial blockade of the Sea of Japan could successfully be mounted, Oga expected that Soviet aircraft and submarines would still be able to advance south from Kamchatka and the Kurile islands and threaten ships by approaching from east of Ogasawara. To counter this threat, it would be necessary to establish a semi-circular blocking line stretching from Northern Japan to Kamchatka. In contrast to the previous focus in JDA white papers on Soviet submarines, Oga's analysis placed roughly equal emphasis on the threat posed by Soviet maritime aviation. The increasing Soviet air threat prompted him to draw parallels between Japan's strategic requirements and Great Britain's defence against Germany during 1940, based on a robust air defence, control over proximate straits, a unified national spirit, strong political leadership and the preservation of trans-oceanic sea lanes to receive logistical support from the United States<sup>71</sup>.

Other Japanese security analysts and former MSDF officers continued to focus more on the submarine threat posed to Japan's sea lanes by the Soviet Union. Admiral Uchida, who remained highly influential within the MSDF, wrote in 1980 that Soviet naval capability posed the utmost threat in the East Asian region. Accordingly he stressed:

'An anti-submarine warfare capability must be the first charge on the resources of any nation precipitately faced with the possibility of starvation and exhaustion by hostile blockade. A force structure based upon the overall striking force of the United States and the regional defence forces of various indigenous nations must be the basic military concept in East Asia'<sup>72</sup>.

<sup>70</sup> See also Asanuma Hirosato, 'Jōhō no Tōtaru Shiisutemu ga Fukaketsu' ('Total System of Intelligence is Indispensable'), On the Sea-Lane Defense Problem in Dispute No. 1, *Sekai no Kansen*, December 1982, pp 126-29.

<sup>71</sup> Oga Ryōhei, *Shiiren no Himitsu*, Shōbunsha, Tokyo, 1983, p 171.

<sup>72</sup> 'Naval Competition and Security in East Asia' in Jonathan Alford (ed.), *Sea Power and Influence: old issues and new challenges*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, Farnborough, 1980, pp 107.

However, the JDA's position on sea lane defence as reflected in defence white papers remained ambiguous. The 1983 *Defense of Japan* carried a section, separated by a border from the official text, entitled "On various debates concerning Protection of Sea Lines of Communication (So-called "sea lane defence")". Without referring to Suzuki's comments, the white paper was vague on the geographical scope of sea lane defence, noting that while Japan's goal was to achieve a capability to provide SLOC protection to "about 1,000 nautical miles or so", the actual scope of sea and airspace to be defended "all depends on the situation at the time"<sup>73</sup>.

Regarding the defence of foreign ships bound for Japan, the JDA's position was also ambiguous, noting that although the right of self-defence would not normally be extended to foreign ships on the high seas carrying goods to Japan, "as a matter of theory, there is an undeniable possibility that, if an armed attack takes place against this nation and if Japan is in the midst of exercising the right of self-defence, the nation attacking Japan might resort to indiscriminate attacks on third nation vessels with cargoes bound for Japan, in order to stop their transportation". Thus, according to the JDA's interpretation, if such cargoes were deemed "vital", SDF defence operations to halt any attacks on shipping could be construed as falling within the legal definition of the individual right of self defence. Lastly, while noting that the denial of passage through the straits around Japan was constitutional, the white paper also stated that this would only be undertaken *after* an armed attack took place against Japan<sup>74</sup>.

Criticism of the SDF's involvement in sea lane defence came not only from the expected quarters of pacifist party-political and media opinion. Kaihara Osamu, a previous critic of the MSDF's blue-water ambitions, resurfaced to argue that sea lane defence made sense only as a "a gesture or expression of willingness to cooperate with the U.S.", while independent analysts such as Maeda Tetsuo and Chuma Kiyofuku regarded the concept as a device to justify the expansion of SDF capabilities and Japan's incorporation into US global military strategy.

Kaihara put forward counter-arguments supporting the necessity for, and the viability of, a sea lane defence concept -- up-dating those he had advanced a decade earlier. Improvements to Soviet capabilities in the Far East and the further expansion of Japan's trade since the 1960s only increased his conviction that it was pointless for Japan to

<sup>73</sup> *Defense of Japan 1983*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, 1983, pp 73-77.

<sup>74</sup> 'The 1983 Japanese White Paper: an Assessment', *Asian Defence Journal*, December 1983, p 54.



invest resources in protecting trade against the implausible scenario of a Soviet *guerre de course*.<sup>75</sup> Kaihara's analysis was, to a significant degree, borne out in the JDA's own classified operational research conducted as part of the US-Japan joint study on sea lane defence, the results of which were leaked to the *Daily Yomiuri* in December 1986. Based on four scenarios for Soviet attacks against Japan (ranging from escalation over a period of six months to a large-scale assault and assuming only limited support from the United States), the JDA estimated SDF losses as involving:

- the destruction of 45 per cent of the MSDF's destroyers;
- 30 per cent of civilian cargo vessels used for transportation of oil, iron ore and grain;
- up to 80 per cent damage to radar installations, and the loss of 30-40 per cent of ASDF fighters; and
- the destruction of 70 per cent of GSDF tanks and 40 per cent casualties among SDF troops<sup>76</sup>.

Maeda Tetsuo (1995), an independent defence commentator, shared the view that the advance of sea lanes to the top of Japan's defence agenda during the 1980s owed more to its political than strategic value. According to Maeda, the elastic spatial definition of sea lanes gave supporters of an extra-territorial defence role for the MSDF and ASDF the flexibility arbitrarily to redraw the geographical boundaries of Japan's self-defence zone without directly confronting the proscriptions against overseas dispatch and collective self-defence. Furthermore, a call to defend the nation's sea lanes could also publicly be presented as an "appropriately commercial" issue to channel the public's perception of Japan's economic vulnerability into increasing popular support for defence spending<sup>77</sup>. Military threats posed to Japanese shipping interests recalled the spectre of a resource cut-off that had generated public concern during the 1973 Oil Crisis and, further back, the "lasting and visceral memory in the Japanese people" of the US wartime blockade. Maeda thought that the MSDF would be able to perform its ASW roles and missions against the Soviet Union adequately within its existing capabilities, given the strategic advantages flowing from its control over the major straits around the

<sup>75</sup> Kaihara Osamu, 'Jissai Mondai to shite Fukanō' ('Such a Mission is far beyond Japan's Power'), On the Sea-Lane Defense Problem in Dispute No. 2, *Sekai no Kansen*, December 1982, pp 130-33; and 'U.S. and Japan: Defense Tensions', *Wall Street Journal*, January 12, 1982, p 28.

<sup>76</sup> This assumed that the Soviet Union would commit around 200 surface combatants, 40 submarines and 950 aircraft (including 150 *Backfire* bombers) and the equivalent of two to three air and seaborne divisions. SDF forces available in 1986 included 14 submarines, 53 destroyers and 79 fixed-wing ASW aircraft and 280 ASDF combat aircraft (Study Predicts Soviets Could Seize Sea-Lanes', *The Daily Yomiuri*, January 6, 1987, p 1).

<sup>77</sup> See also Matsumae Tatsuhiro, *The Limits of Defense: Japan as an Unsinkable Aircraft-Carrier*, Tōkai University Press, 1988, p 139-40.

Sea of Japan. However, by linking sea lane defence to a semi-redundant convoying concept, the MSDF could better justify their status and budget-driven preference for a large surface fleet. Like Katahara (1990), Maeda also believed that the overlapping interests and close communication between the MSDF and US Navy led both organisations to cooperate in exerting pressure on the Japanese government to allocate more resources to modernising Japan's maritime defence capabilities. Finally, he regarded claims that the Soviet Union was targeting Japan's SLOC in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea (echoed in Japan's 1979 defence white paper) as alarmist given that Soviet bases in Vietnam located astride Japan's major economic SLOC would be vulnerable to counter-attack from US forces in the region in the early stages of any conflict.

## **VI. Nakasone and sea lane defence.**

In November 1982, Nakasone Yasuhiro replaced Suzuki as prime minister. Nakasone was to remain premier for five years, a duration in post-war Japanese politics exceeded only by Sato Eisaku (1964-72). As prime minister, Nakasone adopted a policy agenda less radical than his record either as JDA Director General or parliamentarian, choosing not to advocate constitutional revision or a revival of autonomous defence -- measures that remained too controversial for the LDP to risk a backlash from the opposition parties and public opinion, with contemporary polls recording 70 per cent opposed to constitutional revision (which requires a two-thirds majority vote in the Diet)<sup>78</sup>. However, within these constraints, Nakasone demonstrated a will to advance his policy goals ahead of the prevailing consensus in a way that few post-war premiers had done since Kishi in the 1950s.

Nakasone's approach towards defence differed markedly from that of his immediate predecessors, Suzuki and Ohira, in that he regarded it as an issue on which to demonstrate leadership on both a domestic and international stage. Nakasone's objective of awakening a "defence consciousness" (*bōei no ishiki*) among the electorate formed part of a wider aim to achieve a "settling of Japan's post-war accounts" including the correction of a perceived pacifist bias in the education system founded during the Occupation<sup>79</sup>. In foreign policy, Nakasone saw defence as part of his objective of gaining 'membership of the west'. In an international context in which the United States was pressuring its NATO allies to spend more on defence, Nakasone

<sup>78</sup> 'Rearming Japan', *Christian Science Monitor*, April 4, 1983, pp 13-15.



signed the 1983 Williamsburg G7 Summit Declaration to “maintain sufficient military strength to deter any attack, to counter any threat, and to ensure the peace”. In a bilateral context, boosting Japan’s military efforts was also seen by Nakasone as a means to obtain a more ‘equal’ alliance relationship with the United States<sup>80</sup>.

Sea lane defence presented Nakasone with a ready-made platform upon which to pursue the twin objectives of boosting defence spending above the symbolic threshold of one per cent of Gross National Product (GNP) and bolstering bilateral defence cooperation with the United States. In January 1983, two months after taking office, he gave an interview to the *Washington Post*, in which he declared, first, that “the whole Japanese archipelago ... should be like an unsinkable aircraft carrier ... against infiltration of the *Backfire* bomber”. Second, he promised “full control of four straits that go through the Japanese islands so that there should be no passage of Soviet submarines and other naval activities”. Third, he linked these objectives to a desire “to defend the sea lanes between Guam and Tokyo and between the Strait of Taiwan and Osaka”<sup>81</sup>.

Nakasone subsequently reaffirmed his intention before the Diet of achieving the levels of defence capability set out in the *taikō* as soon as possible and announced an exemption for the United States from Japan’s ban on arms exports<sup>82</sup>. In February, Nakasone declared before the Diet that if Japan was under attack the SDF would have the legal right to assist US naval vessels on the high seas if they were on their way to defend Japan. This expansion of the individual right of self-defence was a significant move towards broadening the scope of defence activities seen as permissible within the ban on collective self defence<sup>83</sup>.

During the spring of 1983, Nakasone travelled to Southeast Asia to assuage regional concerns that Japan intended to expand the geographical range of its sea lane defence

<sup>79</sup> Aurelia George, *The Nakasone Challenge: Historical Constraints and New Initiatives in Japan’s Defence Policy*, Legislative Research Service, The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Discussion Paper No. 2, 1987, pp 24-26.

<sup>80</sup> ‘Japan’s Choice: A Strategy for World Peace and Prosperity’: Nakasone’s speech at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, June 11, 1984, Press Release No. 1149, Embassy of Japan, Canberra, June 18, 1984. See also Norman D Levin, *Japan’s Changing Defense Posture*, Rand Note N-2739-OSD, June 1988, pp 21-23.

<sup>81</sup> ‘Shouldering Arms -- and a Bigger Budget Burden’, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 3, 1983, p 46; Nakasone’s interview is interesting not only in that he referred to the Strait of Taiwan rather than the Bashi channel as the southern extent of Japan’s sea lane defence area, but he also specified four straits to be defended within Japan’s immediate environs. In addition to Sōya, Tsugarū and Tsushima, Nakasone was probably referring to the Osumi strait near Shimomaseki, separating Kyushu and southern Honshu.

<sup>82</sup> ‘Policy Speech by Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone to the 98th session of the National Diet’, January 24, 1983, Press Release No. 1122, Embassy of Japan, Canberra, p 8.

<sup>83</sup> Sato Seizaburo, ‘Clarifying the Right of Collective Self-Defense’, *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 3 No. 2, Fall/Winter 1996, pp 91-107.

activities south of the Bashi Channel<sup>84</sup>. The strength of Asian reaction to his proposal to expand the SDF, as JDA Director General in 1970, had led Nakasone to be particularly mindful of the importance of assuaging foreign concerns about Japan's rearmament. One major advantage of the description of 1,000 nm as a 'limit' to Japan's sea lane defence responsibilities was that Japan's defence zone could be officially kept to a point north of the Philippines, thereby avoiding inflaming regional suspicions about Japan's intentions<sup>85</sup>. Nakasone's enthusiastic backing of sea lane defence and commitment to the "straits blockade" (*kaikyō fūsa*) helped to recover US support, which had waned following the Suzuki administration's attempts to limit the fallout of the premier's comments in 1981. The commencement of the study into sea lane defence, from March 1983, further reinforced Nakasone's efforts to prove Tokyo's credentials as a military ally.

Nakasone was determined to breach the one per cent of GNP defence spending 'limit', which had stood as official Cabinet policy since 1976. However, rather than confronting the limit directly, he proposed to fund the new MTDPE for 1986-1990 at a level deemed necessary to complete the *taikō* that would automatically exceed the one per cent of GNP threshold at some point in the programme's duration. Since the 1983-87 MTDPE had fallen approximately 50 per cent short of its targets for want of official backing, Nakasone undertook to upgrade the new MTDPE to the status of a government programme, with the authority of cabinet backing necessary to override MoF objections<sup>86</sup>.

Nakasone was politically strong enough in 1985 to win backing within the LDP for this course of action. The 1986-1990 MTDPE, with appropriations set at 18.4 trillion yen (in 1985 prices), was adopted as a government programme on September 18, 1985, and redesignated the Mid-Term Defense Program (MTDP). However, the effort to break the one per cent of GNP barrier in 1985 failed, owing partly to higher-than-expected economic growth that year, and it was not until 1987 that it was finally surpassed by a margin of 0.004 per cent. The text of the MTDP identified three defence functions to be strengthened:

i) air defence of the main islands;

<sup>84</sup> Akaha Tsuneo, 'Japan's Response to Threats of Shipping Disruptions in Southeast Asia and the Middle East', *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 2, Summer 1986, pp 270-71.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Capt Nakanishi Kenji, Research Department, Maritime Staff College, March 4, 2002.

<sup>86</sup> Chuma Kiyofuku, 'The 1986-90 Defense Plan: Does It Go Too Far?', *Japan Quarterly* Vol. 33 No. 1 Jan-April 1986, pp 13-18.



- ii) protection of SLOC in the waters surrounding Japan; and
- iii) capability to counter an invasion.

The MTDP thus placed the mission of sea lane defence within the framework of the *taikō* for the first time, something that the US-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines had not achieved<sup>87</sup>. The MTDP also delineated an ambitious set of procurement targets, tailored towards offshore air and sea defence capabilities, where US expectations were highest. Allocations to the MSDF and ASDF reached a combined level of nearly 50 per cent of the budget allocated to the three SDF (garnering 23.4 per cent and 26.4 per cent respectively) while the GSDF's allocation -- although still the largest -- fell to 37 per cent<sup>88</sup>.

The existing MSDF fleet was to be modernised to improve its anti-submarine, air defence and mine warfare capabilities. With nine additional destroyers to be commissioned under the MTDP, the MSDF would have a total of 62, compared to the "approximately 60" authorised by the *taikō*. The submarine fleet was raised to 16, and a commitment to acquire a total of 100 P-3Cs reaffirmed. Provision was also made to acquire twelve MH-53 minesweeping helicopters. This expansion of maritime aviation required the creation of two new squadrons bringing the total to 16. With these adjustments, the MSDF's unit structures and operational aircraft matched the quantitative force structure blueprint contained in the *taikō*. A new ASW centre equipped with US software was also opened at the joint naval base in Yokosuka in 1987<sup>89</sup>. The introduction both of new missile armament and of anti-submarine helicopters aboard escort destroyers was made a subject of studies, resulting in the decision to acquire Aegis-equipped destroyers in 1987. The Aegis radar capability would greatly expand the surface fleet's air defence at sea and improve interoperability with the US Navy from the first ship delivery in 1993. While the Aegis procurement was justified in terms of fulfilling Japan's sea lane defence commitments out to 1,000 nm, towards the end of the Cold War the specific operational role of Aegis destroyers was "to provide a sanctuary route for US carriers coming to the defence of Japan"<sup>90</sup>.

Both the ASDF and GSDF (with the incorporation of the straits closure mission) also used sea lane defence to justify both their roles and procurement plans in the mid- to

<sup>87</sup> 'The Mid-term Defense Program (FY 1986-1990)', *Defense Bulletin*, Vol. 9, No. 1, September 1985, Public Information Division, Japan Defense Agency.

<sup>88</sup> *Defense of Japan 1985*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, p 149.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Capt Nakanishi Kenji, Research Department, Maritime Staff College, March 4, 2002.

late-1980s. The most significant increase to the ASDF inventory implemented under the MTDP was in the total of F-15s, 63 of which were planned for acquisition, raising the authorised total from 155 to 187<sup>91</sup>. A further five E-2Cs were acquired to bolster surveillance. Among several feasibility studies authorised in the MTDP, including Over-the-Horizon (OTH) radar and in-flight refuelling, dedicated research into 'air defence over the sea' (*yojō bōkū*) -- inaugurated in December 1987 -- was commissioned in order to weigh procurement options in the light of new SDF operational responsibilities out to 1,000 nm. The ASDF also rationalised its plans to acquire Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACs) aircraft from the United States in terms of fulfilling Japan's sea lane defence commitments.

Although the United States aimed to build up ASDF and MSDF capabilities in particular, the GSDF was also able to use sea lane defence as a rationale to defend its budgetary allocation, especially once the Nakasone administration committed the SDF to blockading the "four straits". Based on a scenario for a Soviet landing in Hokkaido, the GSDF adopted "Sea Shore Strike" as a new operational concept to orient its doctrine and procurement strategy. With the fielding of SSM-1 surface-to-ship missile units under the MTDP, the GSDF also gained an integral role in the defence of the Sōya and Tsugarū straits<sup>92</sup>.

Despite the Reagan administration's increasing satisfaction with Japan's defence efforts under Nakasone, pressure on Tokyo to raise its defence spending to 2-3 per cent of GNP continued to mount at the Congressional level. In June 1985, during a visit to Washington by JDA Director General Kato Koichi, the US Senate passed a motion calling on Tokyo to increase military spending<sup>93</sup>. This was followed up by further legislation requiring the President to report to Congress on Japan's progress in implementing the *taikō* and towards meeting its sea lane defence commitments by 1990<sup>94</sup>.

<sup>90</sup> Michael Green, 'Despite Aegis, Japan Still Will Depend on U.S. Navy', *Defense News*, August 13, 1990, p 8.

<sup>91</sup> Acquisition of F-15s was one area where the MTDP fell short of its procurement targets: a total of 187 aircraft was not acquired until the 1991-95 MTDP.

<sup>92</sup> A 1989 article by Japan's defence attaché to Washington, Matsukane Hisamoto, reveals the extent to which sea lane defence served as a rationale to justify the force structure and operational concepts of all three Self Defense Forces; 'Japan and Security of the Sea Lanes', *Global Affairs*, (Spring): 1989, pp 61-63. See also Vice Admiral Kitamura and Nishimura Shigeki, 'Transformation of the U.S.-Japan Defense Posture: The New Soviet Challenge', International Institute for Global Peace (IIGP) Policy Paper, October 1991.

<sup>93</sup> Joseph P. Keddell, Jr. *The Politics of Defense in Japan: Managing Internal and External Pressures*, M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 1994, p 127.

<sup>94</sup> Katahara Eiichi, *The Politics of Japanese Defence Policy Making, 1975-1989*, unpublished PhD thesis, Griffith University, April 1990, pp 280-282.



Nonetheless, by the end of 1986, Nakasone's administration had done enough to head off a rupture in alliance relations that might have occurred had a less defence-minded leader been in power. Nakasone achieved a 36 per cent rise in spending between 1982 and 1987 -- a rate of increase above any NATO country except the United States<sup>95</sup>. The tempo of alliance cooperation increased in tandem: Nakasone granted permission for the United States to station F-16s at the joint base in Misawa from April 1985, significantly enhancing US maritime strike capabilities in the Northwest Pacific; the first joint ground exercises took place in Hokkaido in 1986; and in that year the MSDF sent a full escort flotilla and a P-3C contingent to the RIMPAC exercises.

The MTDP force levels were still considerably below those proposed by the United States at Hawaii in June 1981. However the pattern of procurements was clearly directed towards boosting those capabilities -- ASW, mine warfare, and extended air defence -- in which the US had the greatest strategic interest. A joint US-Japan study on interoperability was set up in January 1987, and exercises conducted under the auspices of the Guidelines continued to deepen cooperation and exchange between the SDF and US Armed Forces. By Nakasone's last year in office, the US administration was largely satisfied with Japan's burden-sharing efforts, and in January 1987 US representatives at the Sixteenth US-Japan Security Subcommittee meeting endorsed Japan's defence budget and its efforts to conduct the build-up within the confines of the *taikō*. However, Congress was less able to separate defence cooperation (and prospective Japanese purchases of expensive US weapons systems) from mounting trade friction. In 1987, as the US trade deficit with Japan reached \$57 billion, Congress passed a joint resolution demanding that Japan should devote 3 per cent of GNP to defence<sup>96</sup>.

Nakasone's successors returned to an essentially low-profile, 'incrementalist' approach towards defence. Defence spending continued to increase at around 5-6 per cent through 1991, but peaked both as a proportion of GNP and government spending in fiscal 1988<sup>97</sup>. By the late-1980s, the pendulum in US policy towards Japan, which had tilted for so long in favour of increasing the level of SDF armament, began to swing back towards the objective of keeping this within 'defensive' bounds. The US Ambassador to Tokyo

<sup>95</sup> Joseph P. Keddell, Jr. *The Politics of Defense in Japan: Managing Internal and External Pressures*, M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 1994, p100, 131.

<sup>96</sup> S. Javed Maswood, *Japanese Defence: the Search for Political Power*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Allen and Unwin, 1990, pp 46-47.

<sup>97</sup> The respective figures are 1.013 per cent of GNP and 6.51 per cent of the general account (Joseph P. Keddell, Jr. *The Politics of Defense in Japan: Managing Internal and External Pressures*, M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 1994, p 149).

during the early 1990s, Michael Armacost, later recalled that the Department of Defense decided to “draw a line in the sand” over the MSDF’s ambitions to acquire an aircraft carrier and aerial refuelling, although he noted that this desire was “perhaps encouraged by their counterparts in the US Navy and Air force”. In Armacost’s view, although this capability was relevant to its sea lane surveillance and defence mission, it “signalled possibly larger ambitions as well”. MSDF ambitions to acquire an aircraft carrier -- an aspiration common to all large navies -- were still ingrained, despite the deepening of defence cooperation with the US Navy<sup>98</sup>. In the late 1980s, JDA officials testified before the Diet that light aircraft carriers would be permissible under the Constitution. However, studies into the suitability of acquiring a vertical take-off and landing capability to solve the MSDF’s weakness in air defence at sea, concluded that *Harrier*-type aircraft would be too slow to combat the Tu-22M<sup>99</sup>.

## VII. The Tanker War.

Coinciding with the most active debate on Japan’s involvement in sea lane defence, during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88), Japanese shipping in fact faced a direct military threat in the Strait of Hormuz, through which around 55 per cent of its oil was shipped at the time. As far back as 1980, Republican Congressmen Paul Findley had used the prospect of an Iranian blockade of the Strait to press Japan to contribute to US-led patrols of the Gulf<sup>100</sup>. As a result of such attacks, early in the conflict the Japan Shipowners’ Association (JSA) (*nihon senshu kyōkai*) and the powerful All-Japan Seamen’s Union (*zennikkai*) restricted their members’ activities aboard tankers in the Gulf region<sup>101</sup>. Despite pleas for both sides to respect freedom of navigation from Japan’s UN ambassador, Kuroda Mizuo, and talks between Foreign Minister Abe Shintaro and his Iranian and Iraqi counterparts in September 1984, attacks on Japanese-owned and chartered tankers persisted. On July 5, 1984, a Japanese engineer was killed after Iranian aircraft bombed the Liberian-registered tanker *Primrose*, while it loaded oil at the Ras Tanura terminal in Saudi Arabia.

The failure of Japan’s diplomatic efforts to secure its shipping interests in the Middle East served only to underscore its reliance on the US naval presence in the Gulf, and to

<sup>98</sup> Norman D Levin, Mark Lorell, and Arthur Alexander, *The Wary Warriors: Future Directions in Japanese Security Policies*, Rand, Santa Monica, 1993, p 53; and Usui Naoaki, ‘Japanese Navy Stresses Updates ASW Capability’, *Defense News*, September 9, 1991, p 9.

<sup>99</sup> Michael H Armacost, *Friends or Rivals?: the Insider’s Account of U.S.-Japan Relations*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1996, pp 88-90; and interview with Adm. Kawamura Sumihiko, Okazaki Institute, March 1999.

<sup>100</sup> *Yomiuri Shimbun*, October 8, 1980, p 1.

<sup>101</sup> Akaha Tsuneo, ‘Japan’s Response to Threats of Shipping Disruptions in Southeast Asia and the Middle East’, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 2, Summer 1986, pp 255-77.



strengthen US arguments that Japan, if unable to commit naval forces directly, should at least boost its own defence efforts, thus enabling more Seventh Fleet assets to be released from the Northwest Pacific. Japanese-owned and registered tankers (including the 180,000-ton *Nisshin Maru* and the 227,000-ton *Diamond Marine*) were among the victims of escalating air and surface attacks on shipping by Iran in August 1987. As a result, the JSA and the All-Japan Seamen's Union on September 2 temporarily suspended all Japanese-operated ships from entering the Strait of Hormuz, while the Shipowners Labour Relations Agency began organising three-tanker convoys for shipping already in the Gulf to minimise the risk of further attacks<sup>102</sup>.

In this context, MOFA, reluctant to request US naval protection for Japanese shipping for fear of Iranian reprisals against Japan's economic (mainly oil-related) interests in the country, proposed making financial contributions in support of US operations in the Gulf which had expanded to include escort operations for Kuwaiti-flagged tankers. However, Prime Minister Nakasone proposed to dispatch MSDF minesweepers directly to the Gulf. In the face of strong opposition from within his own party, including from Chief Cabinet Secretary Gotōda Masaharu, a decision was made to supply navigational aids to Saudi Arabia instead<sup>103</sup>. Nakasone's failure to win support for his initiative to dispatch minesweepers in 1987 demonstrated that in both practical and political terms, Japan's ability to extend naval protection to its shipping beyond 1,000 nm remained well beyond its reach. Although MSDF minesweepers were dispatched to the region in April 1991, this occurred only after the end of the Gulf War -- only underscoring the government's inability to dispatch the Self Defense Forces overseas in circumstances that might imperil its ban on collective self defence.

### **Conclusion.**

Sea lane defence emerged at the centre of Japan's defence policy and alliance relations in the late 1970s and 1980s owing, *a priori*, to pressure from the United States to boost defence efforts. This reflected Washington's assessment of its own deteriorating strategic position vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and determination to shift more of the burden of defence to regional allies. Japan's dependence on the US Navy for security in the Gulf region -- particularly after the Iran-Iraq War demonstrated the vulnerability of Japanese shipping to attack -- provided a persuasive rationale for US officials to pressure Tokyo to boost its defence efforts in the Northwest Pacific to compensate for the

---

<sup>102</sup> 'Iran attacks Japanese-leased oil-tankers', *The Japan Times*, September 19, 1987, p 1.

reallocation of US Seventh Fleet assets to the Indian Ocean. Moreover, US officials who were familiar with the longstanding ambitions of former Imperial Navy officers to develop the MSDF into a blue-water navy oriented for a sea lane defence role knew that appealing to Japan's vulnerability to blockade was likely to register politically in Japan as would few other scenarios for military cooperation. As a relative 'dove' on defence issues, Prime Minister Suzuki's May 1981 comments and subsequent retractions fit the pattern of minimal, *ad hoc* responses to US burden-sharing demands consistent with the Yoshida Doctrine and domestic constraints laid down in the 1945-77 period. However, US efforts to expand Japan's share of the 'defence burden' via sea lane defence also met with support among Japan's security policy decision-makers, including within the JDA, MOFA and LDP, who for their own varying strategic, bureaucratic and political reasons supported an increase in Japan's defence and alliance cooperation efforts.

Suzuki appears, at best, to have been an unwitting accomplice in setting the political agenda for sea lane defence in the 1980s. The substance of his comments in May 1981 closely echoed his statements before the House of Councillors Special Committee on Security in October 1980 and Diet speeches of JDA officials as far back as Kubo Takuya's statement in November 1970. Having received assurances from his staff that his speeches to be delivered in the United States reflected existing policy that was already a matter of Diet record, Suzuki was under the impression that he was merely re-affirming JDA plans for defending convoys dating back to the 1960s, to appease US officials eager to press Japan for an expanded territorial defence commitment. However, to Washington, the prime minister's comments constituted official acceptance of an expanded geographical division of responsibilities within the Alliance. Initially resisted by the LDP leadership, the political rationale of sea lane defence was subsequently embraced and expanded to include a blockade of the Sea of Japan by Nakasone, who backed the build-up of SDF capabilities and alliance cooperation against the Soviet Union. Defence suited Nakasone's pursuit of a moderate nationalist domestic political agenda and was also part of a wider shift in Japanese elite and political opinion that perceived a relative decline in US power as detrimental to Japan's security.

For the SDF, the real problem, even under an administration sympathetic to funding its expansion, remained its need to find a credible role that, on the one hand, was acceptable to the public and accountable to the Constitution, and, on the other, was able to fulfil the

---

<sup>103</sup> Interview with Japan's former ambassador to Washington, Murata Ryōhei, March 6, 2002; and Sudo Sueo, *Southeast Asia in Japanese Security Policy*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1991, p 39.



minimum strategic requirements expected and sometimes demanded by the United States. Sea lane defence proved to be a highly flexible concept that lent itself to these policy needs. A shift in SDF doctrine towards adopting an extra-territorial sea and air area defence role, functionally integrated within US military strategy, could thus be argued as falling within the right of individual self-defence, based upon a Soviet threat to Japan's sea lanes. Although the "protection of maritime transportation" was maintained as part of the MSDF's rationale for sea lane defence, this masked an incremental but pronounced shift from the original limited concept of escorted convoys dating back to the 1960s, progressing through an intermediary stage of patrolled sea lanes in the early 1970s, to a concept of zonal defence by the time of Japan's entry into RIMPAC in 1980. Throughout the decade, the pattern of SDF procurement and exercises pointed to its deepening integration within US global military strategy directed against the Soviet Union. Although the end of the Cold War in 1990-91 abruptly withdrew the strategic rationale that had underpinned sea lane defence, sea lane security would continue to assert itself as a strategic priority for Japan in the post-Cold War era against a more diffuse, but also more plausible array of threats and challenges, as will be shown in Chapters Seven and Eight.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Japan's Sea Lane Diplomacy in Southeast Asia since the 1970s

#### Introduction.

This chapter explores the diplomatic aspects of Japan's SLOC security, concentrating on Japan's efforts to secure its navigational interests in a region of particular importance outside the 1,000 nautical mile (nm) perimeter of sea lane defence. The choice of Southeast Asia as a case study for Japan's sea lane diplomacy reflects the economic importance to Japan of chokepoint straits and seas in the region, as profiled in chapters One and Two. These include the Straits of Malacca, Sunda, Lombok-Makassar and the South China Sea, through which pass approximately 42 per cent of Japan's trade and most of its energy imports.

First, Japan's interests are partly to ensure that safe navigation is physically possible through congested, constricted and shallow waterways. Second, its status as the major extra-regional user of Southeast Asia's straits and coastal seas, for shipments of oil, liquefied natural gas (LNG), nuclear waste and other hazardous cargoes has also made it the object of coastal states' environmental concerns, with the potential to create political friction. Third, coastal states' jurisdictional claims to the region's most important sea lines of communication (SLOC), many of which have received recognition under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) framework, have made it important for Japan to be diplomatically engaged in the region.

Given the emphasis that Japan has placed on excluding any strategic military content to its diplomatic relations, especially with other Asian countries sensitive to the legacy of wartime occupation by Japan, this thesis is also concerned with the extent to which Tokyo's self-declared pursuit of 'comprehensive security' has enabled Japan to ensure its SLOC security interests with regional states in overlapping fields including economic relations and diplomacy. The importance of diplomacy in securing Japan's energy supply routes was identified in the 1979 official *Report on Comprehensive National Security*, which stressed:

It is ... important to find ways to ensure the safe passage of tankers through the long transport route passing the Indian Ocean, the Malacca Strait, and the South China Sea. Since Japan cannot resort to its own military power to protect tankers in



these areas, it must give adequate consideration to alternative policies for this purpose and be willing to support the cost they entail<sup>1</sup>.

These concerns are echoed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) December 2002 Energy Diplomacy statement, which declares “maintaining and enhancing friendly relations with Middle East countries and other energy producing countries and countries along international shipping lanes” to be among Japan’s foremost diplomatic objectives<sup>2</sup>.

This chapter charts the evolution of Japan’s sea lane diplomacy from its failed bid to internationalise the Straits of Malacca in the early 1970s up to 2003. It initially locates Japan’s SLOC-security interests in Southeast Asia in the general context of its regional diplomacy. This is followed by an analysis of Japan’s responses to and perceptions of the UNCLOS framework. The chapter then focuses on three core sea lane security concerns for Japan in Southeast Asia. First, the Straits of Malacca demand separate consideration owing to their economic importance to Japan and the fact that jurisdiction is shared among three states. Second, Japan’s diplomacy towards Indonesia is explored in the context of the latter’s archipelagic doctrine and control of several other SLOC important to Japan’s trade. Third, Japan’s shipments of radioactive fuels, which have been the object of particular opposition among coastal states in the region and beyond, are examined, demonstrating the importance of environmental problems within SLOC security.

The chapter shows that Japan has developed a composite approach that blends official and private diplomacy (via non-governmental organisations and commercial organisations) as well as reliance on other maritime states to pursue the more confrontational aspects of freedom of navigation in the region. Specifically, this chapter argues Japan’s diplomacy has been effective in terms of limiting its vulnerability to “troublesome” conditions and tolls being placed by regional states on commercial shipping. By establishing cooperative frameworks and good will with Southeast Asian states, Japan has reduced its own perception of vulnerability and need for compensatory defence policy responses. Potential military threats to Japan’s navigational interests in Southeast Asia have also been made less likely as a result of its

---

<sup>1</sup> *Report on Comprehensive National Security* (Translation), Comprehensive National Security Study Group, July 2, 1980, p 54.



broader diplomacy and economic linkages with the region. However, Chapter Seven argues that Japan’s diplomatic influence has only a limited effect in regard to non-state actor threats posed to its shipping interests in Southeast Asia by piracy and terrorism, while Chapter Eight suggests that China’s potential threat to the Southeast Asian sea lanes is regarded by Japan’s policy-makers as requiring a different order of diplomatic or defence policy response.

Map 8: Southeast Asia



Source: CIA/University of Texas



### **I. Japan's diplomacy towards Southeast Asia.**

Having officially forsworn military options in its dealings with the coastal states, Japan has had to rely on almost exclusively non-military means to secure access through the Southeast Asian chokepoints, making this the most critical test of its diplomatic and economic levers to deliver a liberal passage regime to serve its international shipping interests. However, Japan's almost entirely commercial interest in freedom of navigation in the region has also simplified its dealings with littoral states more interested in limiting foreign military deployments for reasons of security and sovereignty than inhibiting merchant shipping<sup>3</sup>.

In looking after its interests in navigational access and shipping safety in Southeast Asia, Japan has generally been content to follow the lead of more assertive Western maritime states, such as the United States and Australia<sup>4</sup>. This reflects the pattern of Japan's post-war foreign policy approach in Asia, which was based on maintaining a low political profile in order to secure its resource import needs and to minimise political risk to its large commercial presence in the region. However, a policy approach using various non-military policy levers and a mixture of state and private sector involvement has gradually developed and has proved largely successful in securing Japan's navigational security interests in the region from legal and environmental challenges by coastal states.

In the mid-1970s, a number of violent anti-Japanese riots in Southeast Asian capitals forced a review of Tokyo's regional policies. Since that time, the record of Japan's diplomacy with the key coastal states in Southeast Asia has been notable less for diplomatic failures or triumphs than for a stable continuum. Political and commercial relations have strengthened steadily, both at a bilateral level and through Japan's multilateral interface with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which was formed in 1967. Despite the implication of the non-official 'Malacca Straits defence theory' (*maraka bōeiron*) of the late 1960s that maritime Southeast Asia falls potentially within Japan's defence zone, it has been part of Japan's official defence policy to reassure Southeast Asian countries, particularly in respect of its security interest in the straits that "Japan has only the capability of securing shipping within the

<sup>3</sup> See for example, Jay L. Batongbacal, 'Archipelagic Sealanes and Transit Passage Through Straits: Shared Responsibilities Is (sic) Essential to Implementation', Conference paper presented at the 13th International Conference on Sea Lines of Communications, Canberra, April, 2001, p 6.

<sup>4</sup> Akaha Tsuneo, *Japan in Global Ocean Politics*, University of Hawaii Press and Law of the Sea Institute, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1985, pp 77-9.

range of 1,000 miles from Tokyo, Nagoya and Osaka”<sup>5</sup>. Visiting Japanese premiers have tended to adhere to former Prime Minister Fukuda Takeo’s formulation (laid out in Manila in August 1977) of seeking “heart-to-heart” relations based on: 1) not becoming a “military power”; 2) seeking closer economic, political and cultural cooperation with states in the region; and 3) promoting ties between ASEAN and Indochina<sup>6</sup>.

Economic relations based on the ‘three pillars’ of investment, trade and aid have underpinned the rhetoric of closer ties and cooperation since the ‘Fukuda doctrine’ was announced. Following Fukuda’s visit, Japan promised \$1 billion in aid. However, in large part the deepening of economic ties resulted from the revaluation of the yen under the 1985 Plaza Accords, which triggered a flood of foreign direct investment (FDI) from Japan into Southeast Asia. FDI levels increased from \$855 million in 1986 to \$4.7 billion by 1988, making Japan the region’s largest external source of capital and Southeast Asia Japan’s preferred overseas production platform in Asia. Additionally, between 1985 and 1992, trade between ASEAN and Japan rose by an annual average of 20 per cent, making ASEAN Japan’s third largest trade partner after the United States and the European Union. As the third leg of Japan’s economic ties, Southeast Asia emerged as one of the primary beneficiaries of the expansion of Japan’s Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) programme, the world’s largest in the 1980s and 1990s until overtaken by the United States in 2001. In addition to benefiting Japanese firms relocating to Southeast Asia<sup>7</sup>, ODA was and is still viewed by the MOFA as “creating an international environment favourable to Japan”<sup>8</sup>. Some of Japan’s aid to major ASEAN states, such as the Philippines and Indonesia, was labelled “strategic” during the 1980s owing to the political importance attached to these countries’ Western orientation in a Cold War context and their “strategic location in key transit points in the world’s ocean navigation”<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, articles on JDA Director General Kawara Tsutomu’s 1988 visit to Indonesia: (‘Kawara ends his Indonesia trip satisfactorily, *Jakarta Post*, July 2, 1988, p 1); and JDA Director General Mihara Asao’s 1977 testimony before the House of Councillors Cabinet Committee ‘Japan Shipping Defenseless in Malacca Strait’, *The Japan Times*, November 16, 1977, p 4); and also Chapter Four.

<sup>6</sup> Chaiwat Kamchoo, ‘Japan’s Role in South-east Asian Security: *Plus ça Change*’, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 64, 1991, pp 9-10. For the most recent example, see Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō’s speech: ‘Japan and ASEAN in East Asia - A Sincere and Open Partnership’ delivered in Singapore, January 14, 2002; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, website: [www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmv0201/speech.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmv0201/speech.html)

<sup>7</sup> Japan’s ODA programme has laid special emphasis on building up the infrastructure of local economies through an allocation to public-works projects double the average of developed country donors.

<sup>8</sup> *Diplomatic Bluebook 1998*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan/Urban Connections, Tokyo 1998, p 97.

<sup>9</sup> Steve Chan, ‘Humanitarianism, Mercantilism, or Comprehensive Security? Disbursement Patterns of Japanese Foreign Aid’, *Asian Affairs*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Spring 1992, pp 10-14.



Japan's economic decline since the collapse of the asset bubble in 1990-91 has eroded its pre-eminent economic position within Southeast Asia. Japan's economy remains five times larger than China's measured in dollars terms and Japanese FDI in the ASEAN region still amounted to 2 billion dollars in 2000. Nonetheless, China's rising economic and political profile in the region, as exemplified by a November 2001 agreement to establish an ASEAN-China Free Trade Area by 2010, has prompted Japan to propose its own plans for deeper economic ties with ASEAN states, on a bilateral and multilateral basis<sup>10</sup>. Such an approach is designed to maintain Southeast Asia as "a sphere of paramount Japanese economic importance"<sup>11</sup>. The fact that Southeast Asia has been exempted from 10 per cent cuts to the overall aid budget implemented by Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō's administration is a testament to the importance Tokyo attaches to the value of ODA as a tool of influence in a region of high economic and strategic value -- not least as a provider of mineral and energy resource exports.

## **II. Japan and UNCLOS.**

In addition to relying on other maritime states, to avoid the impression of overt assertiveness, Tokyo has sought where possible to represent its legal and navigational safety concerns through the multilateral auspices of the IMO as the UN-level body responsible for international shipping interests<sup>12</sup>. According to Leifer (1978), this has handed Japan "the prospect of securing the best of both worlds in that it avoids undue tension with coastal states with whom it has close economic associations while its goal of transit passage is obtained through the diplomacy of the superpowers"<sup>13</sup>.

Japan's approach to UNCLOS has evolved unevenly. According to a personal account of Japan's "inept" and "dismal" negotiating performance at the second UNCLOS conference (UNCLOS II) in the early 1970s, Tokyo's view of UNCLOS was affected by a declining faith in the ability of the United States to protect Japan's sea lanes militarily. This perception led Japanese negotiators to overestimate the power of resource-supplier states while underestimating their own position. Moreover, Japanese representatives drawn from the Foreign, International Trade and Industry, Transport and Justice ministries as well as the agencies for Fisheries, Defense, Land, Natural Resources and

<sup>10</sup> David Kruger and Murray Hiebert, 'Battered but Still on Top', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 24, 2002, pp 24-25.

<sup>11</sup> Richard P Cronin, 'Japan's Expanding Role and Influence in the Asia Pacific Region: Implications for US Interests', *Current Politics and Economics of Japan*, Vol. 3, No. 2/3, 1993, p 121.

<sup>12</sup> Through such agreements as the International Safety Management (ISM) Code and Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) Convention.

Energy were reportedly unable even to reach a coordinated position on many issues put before them<sup>14</sup>. Continued wariness about UNCLOS was behind Japan's decision to oppose the legal concept of a 200 nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), the only one of 116 nations represented at the UNCLOS III meeting in Caracas to do so<sup>15</sup>.

Japanese commentators have periodically expressed concerns over the implications of the UNCLOS framework throughout its evolution (1958-94), especially in regard to 'creeping jurisdiction' and legal justifications that could be used to implement tolls and other restrictions on vessels' movements. According to Japan's senior representative to UNCLOS III, MOFA's former Deputy Director of the Sea Law Office, Iguchi Takeo, the importance of Japan's relations with Indonesia and Malaysia has increased as a result of the Law of the Sea, given its potential implications for freedom of navigation<sup>16</sup>. In 1980, former Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) Chief of Staff Admiral Uchida Kazutomi commented that as long as innocent passage is respected in archipelagic waters and transit passage upheld in international straits "few problems are likely to arise". Equally, Uchida expressed concern about the potential for "states with international straits within their territorial waters impos(ing) troublesome conditions beyond those related to safety and pollution" and other "difficulties and hindrance" in archipelagic waters<sup>17</sup>. Vice-Admiral Yamamoto Makoto, a former Chief of the Self Defense Fleet, has identified "unilateral declarations restricting specific waters" as among the most important potential challenges confronting freedom of navigation in the Asia-Pacific<sup>18</sup>. According to former JDA Administrative Vice-Minister Akiyama Masaru, until 2001 the Agency's most senior policy official, the trend among coastal and archipelagic states to claim surrounding waters, including international straits, constitutes the second-most important maritime security challenge to Japan, after China's future defence capability<sup>19</sup>. In part because of such suspicions, Tokyo's

---

<sup>13</sup> Michael Leifer, *International Straits of the World: Malacca, Singapore and Indonesia*, Sijthoff and Noordhoff, The Netherlands, 1978, p 175.

<sup>14</sup> Blaker, in Gerald L. Curtis (ed.), *Japan's Foreign Policy: After the Cold War: Coping with Change*, M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 1993, pp 4-5.

<sup>15</sup> Akaha Tsuneo, *Japan in Global Ocean Politics*, University of Hawaii Press and Law of the Sea Institute, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1985, p 116.

<sup>16</sup> Iguchi Takeo, 'Emerging Ocean Regime for International Security Cooperation', *Ocean Governance and OPK: The Thirteenth International Symposium Proceedings*, National Institute for Defense Studies, Tokyo, 1998, p 4.

<sup>17</sup> Uchida Kazutomi, 'Naval Competition and Security in East Asia', in Jonathan Alford (ed.), *Sea Power and Influence: old issues and new challenges*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, Farnborough, 1980, pp 105-06.

<sup>18</sup> Yamamoto Makoto, 'Sealane in the Asia-Pacific Region Today and their Vulnerabilities', Eleventh International Conference on the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC) Studies, Tokyo, November 17-18, 1997, pp 1-6.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Akiyama Masahiro, Chairman, Ship and Ocean Foundation, Nippon Foundation, Tokyo, March 4, 2002.



diplomacy on the Straits of Malacca and towards the Law of the Sea was initially counter-productive, as is detailed below.

### III. The Straits of Malacca.

As the major commercial user of the Straits of Malacca, drawing around 90 per cent of its oil and much of its LNG through the straits, the challenge for Tokyo in its dealings with the three 'straits states' -- Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore -- has been to separate its interests in navigational safety as far as possible from politico-legal issues impinging on sovereignty. Generally, whenever the two issues have become entangled, as occurred during the early 1970s, Japan's relations with the coastal states have suffered.

Indonesia is by far the most important of the straits states to the navigational interests of Japan and other extra-regional maritime states given its size and geostrategic location between the Indian Ocean and Pacific (see Map 9, below). A major concern of Indonesia's post-independence leaders was to control the movement of foreign naval forces through the Straits of Malacca, which, it was feared, might otherwise continue to serve as a gateway for foreign powers seeking to intervene in the archipelago. In the early years of the Indonesian Republic such concerns were given credence by the use of the straits by the Dutch to build up their forces in West New Guinea and later by covert assistance by the United States and United Kingdom to rebels in Sumatra and elsewhere with the aim of destabilising President Soekarno's left-leaning government in Jakarta.

**Map 9:** Indonesia (pre-October 1999) and surrounding seas



Source: CIA/University of Texas.



Aspirations to control the straits in their entirety periodically resurfaced during Soekarno's rule. However, Indonesia's declaration of a 12 nm territorial sea in 1957 was followed by legislation in 1960 committing Jakarta to demarcate its sea boundaries with its neighbours by means of a median line in cases where the waters dividing them were less than 24 nm wide. However, cooperation between Indonesia and Malaysia was impossible throughout the 'Confrontation' period (1957-66), when the straits were the scene of military clashes between Indonesian and Commonwealth forces. Only once the anti-Communist President Soeharto was in power and all three littoral states were linked as co-founding members of ASEAN from 1967, did cooperation on the straits again become possible<sup>20</sup>.

For its part, Malaysia shared the desire of many newly independent coastal states, including Indonesia, to "wrest some control from developed nations which had by and large determined the course of customary international law particularly at the law of the sea conferences"<sup>21</sup>. Using powers of decree invoked to quell racial disturbances in May 1969, the Malaysian government enlarged its own territorial sea from 3 nm to 12 nm in August. In March 1970, the two states reached agreement to delimit a common boundary along a median line, placing a 'jurisdictional gate' across the straits. Singapore shared a common interest in improving navigational conditions in the strait. However, as it is also surrounded by Indonesian and Malaysian territory, and strategically reliant on outside powers' access through the Straits of Malacca for its survival, the joint enclosure of the straits by its neighbours signalled negative consequences for its security.

#### **IV. Japan's interests in the Straits of Malacca.**

Although the Straits of Malacca had served as a conduit for Japan's imports and exports since recovery began in the 1950s, Japan's concerns about navigational safety in the straits increased in late 1960s with the introduction of the first 200,000 deadweight tons (DWT) Very Large Crude Carriers (VLCCs), which increased both the risks and stakes involved in a collision or major accident<sup>22</sup>. In July 1967, three months after the *Tokyo Maru* became the first Japanese supertanker to ground itself in the Straits of Malacca,

<sup>20</sup> Dino Patti Djalal, *The Geopolitics of Indonesia's Maritime Territorial Policy*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1996, pp 115-24.

<sup>21</sup> Koh Kheng Lian, *Straits in International Navigation: Contemporary Issues*, Oceana Publications, London, 1982, pp 56-58.

<sup>22</sup> James Morgan, 'Strait and Narrow', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 4, 1971, p 46.



Japan proposed to the Inter-governmental Maritime Consultative Organisation (IMCO) - until 1982, the forerunner to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) -- the creation of 'sea lanes' to separate east-bound and west-bound traffic within the straits. The Indonesian representative to the IMCO agreed to this suggestion in principle, with the proviso "that such an arrangement shall in no circumstances interfere with the rights and integrity of a State in its territorial water". It was also made clear that Indonesia would be unable to bear the costs of any associated survey and dredging work "for the foreseeable future"<sup>23</sup>. Jakarta, for this reason, did not oppose a survey expedition conducted by a Royal Navy hydrographic vessel in 1967.

In July 1968, the Malacca Straits Council was formed in Japan as a private body to coordinate Japanese oil, shipping and marine insurance companies, and to represent their common interests in navigational safety and access to the straits<sup>24</sup>. The Ministry of Transport (MoT) meanwhile began to organise funding for survey expeditions to determine the suitability of the straits for large tankers<sup>25</sup>. In spite of Indonesia's sensitivity regarding its "rights and privileges", and misgivings among all three littoral states over Japan's decision to appropriate the name of the straits for the Malacca Straits Council, Japan's gathering interest in improving navigational safety was not itself the object of concern for either Indonesia or Malaysia.

Changes in Southeast Asia's external security environment around this time were key to a shift in attitudes among the straits states as well as in Japan. Early in 1968, the UK government, under mounting fiscal pressure, announced that it was accelerating by several years its military withdrawal 'East of Suez' to 1971, while from July 1969, the United States began to draw down its forces in mainland Southeast Asia with the announcement of the Nixon Doctrine. The first passage of a Soviet naval flotilla through the straits in 1968 was widely interpreted as a signal of Soviet interest in filling any related power vacuum. Soviet cargo vessels carrying supplies to Moscow's Far Eastern outposts were subsequently sighted regularly in the straits<sup>26</sup>. To Indonesia and Malaysia, these developments represented both new uncertainties and opportunities. To the New Order regime in Jakarta, the Soviet presence prompted fears that Communist

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p 77.

<sup>24</sup> Current contributors include oil firms, marine insurers, the Japan Shipowners Association and individual shipping companies such as K-line. (Interview with Capt. Osuka Yoshihiro, Asst. General Manager, Marine Safety and Environmental Team, 'K'-line, February 28, 2002).

<sup>25</sup> Michael Leifer, *International Straits of the World: Malacca, Singapore and Indonesia*, Sijthoff and Noordhoff, The Netherlands, 1978, p 40.

rebels would receive clandestine support and that Indonesia could potentially be drawn into a superpower clash over access to the straits. In Malaysia, questions were asked in parliament about the government's readiness to prevent unfriendly warships from using the straits even though Western forces retained a small air and naval presence on their eastern shore<sup>27</sup>. By the same token, the drawdown of Anglo-American defence responsibilities in the region was an opportunity for both Indonesia and Malaysia to repair bilateral ties and mutually to assert their sovereignty claims. Obtaining Singapore's cooperation was an important objective for Indonesia, as it would enable the Malacca and Singapore straits to be presented as a single legal entity, on which a common position might jointly be adopted.

Following the Royal Navy survey in 1967, Japan obtained permission from the coastal states to proceed with a preliminary survey of the straits from January to March 1969. The Hydrographic Department of the Maritime Safety Agency and MoT officials also participated in the survey conducted under the auspices of the Malacca Straits Council. As a private level body with plenipotentiary powers, the Malacca Straits Council enabled the government to minimise Japan's diplomatic profile in negotiations on the straits, partly to avoid the impression of imposing its will, but also to avoid conferring *de jure* recognition of Indonesia's and Malaysia's territorial sea claims<sup>28</sup>. The survey identified several shoals and sunken obstacles, and plans were laid for a second expedition. In May, the MoT and MOFA held joint consultations with US International Development Agency, with a view to presenting a plan to secure safety of navigation in the straits to other major users and to the three coastal states later that year.

However, Japanese negotiators learned subsequently that Kuala Lumpur had linked its permission for a new survey to Japan's recognition of the new 12 nm territorial sea boundary declared in August. Tokyo was reluctant to recognise Malaysia's claim, since it amounted to recognition that the narrowest sections of the Straits of Malacca were entirely under the sovereign control of the coastal states. In September 1969, a Japanese naval flotilla was dispatched through the straits. Although this was the MSDF's first post-war training mission to Southeast Asia, it was in part a signal designed to

---

<sup>26</sup> Dino Patti Djalal, *The Geopolitics of Indonesia's Maritime Territorial Policy*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1996, p 116.

<sup>27</sup> Koh Kheng Lian, *Straits in International Navigation: Contemporary Issues*, Oceana Publications, London, 1982, p 60.

<sup>28</sup> Hasjim Djalal notes that Japan has employed a similar tactic of using private organisations to conclude bilateral fisheries agreements with Indonesia over access to the Banda Sea (*Indonesia and the Law of the Sea*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1995, p 154).



demonstrate Japan's concern to keep the straits internationalised, as suggested by the MSDF Chief of Staff's reported comments to departing crews, framing the symbolic importance of the training mission in the context of the Royal Navy's withdrawal from Singapore<sup>29</sup>. When the Administrative Bureau of the Malacca Straits Council attempted to negotiate survey and dredging rights for Japanese vessels separately with Indonesia and Singapore, the approach was rejected by Indonesia<sup>30</sup>. The dispute was settled only in May 1970 following a direct appeal for Malaysia's consent from Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A compromise was eventually reached whereby an Indonesian vessel would be used for the second survey.

Concerned at Malaysia's unexpected linkage to its territorial sea claims and at the new concert between former rivals in Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta, Japan approached the IMCO in 1970 to garner support for some form of institutional representation for itself and other shipping nations on navigational safety matters in the straits. In October, the Japanese delegate to the IMCO Subcommittee on Safety of Navigation revealed Tokyo's intention to "set up an international co-operative system which includes three littoral countries and major shipping countries" as a prerequisite to the introduction of a traffic separation scheme<sup>31</sup>. In early 1971, MoT representatives took the idea one stage further, by proposing to set up a Malacca-Singapore Straits Board, including representatives from major maritime states, to whom the straits states would be required to report on an annual basis. Failing to anticipate the straits states' reaction to these proposals, the issue of international regulation was pursued further by the Japanese delegation at the meeting of the IMCO Subcommittee on Safety of Navigation in London in July 1971.

Indonesia and Malaysia both registered their strong opposition to Japan's "inappropriate" attempt to "take away" the right to control and supervise the straits from the coastal states. On November 16, 1971, Indonesia and Malaysia bilaterally proclaimed the "de-internationalisation" of the straits in a Joint Statement, to which Singapore also partially acceded. The tripartite Joint Statement asserted that:

<sup>29</sup> Michael Leifer, *International Straits of the World: Malacca, Singapore and Indonesia*, Sijthoff and Noordhoff, The Netherlands, 1978, pp 42-43.

<sup>30</sup> Bhabani Sen Gupta, T.T. Poulse, Hemlata Bhatia, *The Malacca Straits and the Indian Ocean: A Study of the Strategic and Legal Aspects of a Controversial Sea-lane*, Macmillan, New Delhi, 1974, pp 58-59.

<sup>31</sup> Michael Leifer, *International Straits of the World: Malacca, Singapore and Indonesia*, Sijthoff and Noordhoff, The Netherlands, 1978, p 45.

- Safety of navigation in the Straits of Malacca and Singapore is the responsibility of the coastal states concerned.
- A body should be established to coordinate safety of navigation, composed only of coastal state representatives.
- The problem of safety of navigation and the question of internationalisation of the straits should be treated as two separate issues.
- While “fully recognising their use for international shipping in accordance with the principle of innocent passage”, Indonesia and Malaysia declared that the Straits of Malacca and Singapore were no longer considered “international straits”. (On this point Singapore restricted itself to “taking note” of the Malaysian-Indonesian position<sup>32</sup>).
- On the basis of this understanding, the three governments approved the continuation of the hydrographic survey.

Thus, Japan's attempts to promote internationalisation of the straits had the opposite effect. Despite protesting against the Joint Statement, when questioned in the Diet about Tokyo's response to the threat of restrictions on Japanese shipping passing through the straits, then-Foreign Minister Fukuda Takeo said only that “Japan would insist on the principle of free passage”<sup>33</sup>. Malaysia's and Indonesia's *fait accompli* exposed the limits of Japan's influence over the littoral states. It was also a set-back for Japan's Southeast Asian diplomacy, casting Tokyo in the role of a former occupying power attempting to impose a solution on decolonising states in Asia -- the very perception that its post-war regional diplomacy was designed to counter.

A change in the legal status of the straits was not inherently threatening to Japan's security; the concerns of government and industry flowed more from uncertainty as to the ultimate intentions of the straits states. It was thought at the time that Indonesia was contemplating the exclusion of large tankers from the Straits of Malacca in order to attract more shipping south through the archipelago, in support of its plans to develop the port of Tjiltjap on the south coast of Java<sup>34</sup>. In the follow-up to the Joint Statement, various official and non-official statements emanating from Malaysia and Indonesia gave Japan further cause for concern. In 1972, Indonesia proposed banning fully-laden VLCCs over 200,000 DWT from traversing the straits, which would have compelled

<sup>32</sup> James Morgan, ‘Strait and Narrow’, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 4, 1971, p 46.

<sup>33</sup> Sen Gupta et al, *The Malacca Straits and the Indian Ocean: A Study of the Strategic and Legal Aspects of a Controversial Sea-lane*, Macmillan, New Delhi, 1974, p 57.



Japanese supertankers either to divert through Lombok or to sail under-capacity. As both of these options would have incurred considerable extra cost they were resisted. On April 17, 1972, the Chief of Staff of the Indonesian Navy was reported as saying that warships and supertankers would be attacked if they entered Indonesian territorial waters<sup>35</sup>. VLCCs, the majority of them ferrying oil through the straits to Japan, were increasingly the object of environmental concerns in the littoral states, with Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Tun Ismail Abdul Rahman telling an ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Singapore that the coastal states opposed internationalisation of the straits as "such a concept would ... endanger the livelihood of large segments of the population of our countries"<sup>36</sup>.

Japan was particularly concerned that the straits states would use their sovereignty claims to charge tolls similar to those charged in sea canals used for international navigation. In 1972, Tunjku Razaleigh, then president of the Malay Chambers of Commerce, laid out plans -- without official approval -- to set up a joint Malaysian-Indonesian authority that would charge levies on ships transiting the straits, aimed in part at directing traffic to Malaysian and Indonesian ports facing the straits. The proposed annual income from levies (set at \$5,000 for oil tankers, \$3,000 for cargo ships and \$1,000 for cargo ships calling at Malaysian and Indonesian ports) was estimated at \$147 million<sup>37</sup>.

The early 1970s was the low-point for Japan's Straits of Malacca policy and marked the end of its attempts to gain a direct role in administering the straits through an international regime. The Joint Statement forced a re-evaluation of Japanese policy, prompting greater recognition of the coastal states' interests and the development of other non-military policy levers, mainly through increased financial and technical assistance. For their part, the coastal states subsequently moderated their stance having succeeded in extending their sovereignty over the straits. This was partly because security concerns relating to the straits lessened as the domestic and regional security environment stabilised in the 1970s. Japan's decision to part-fund Malaysia's development of Port Klang as a repair facility capable of accommodating VLCCs, thus

---

<sup>34</sup> 'What's in it for Them?', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 11, 1971, p 2.

<sup>35</sup> Cited in Koh Kheng Lian, *Straits in International Navigation: Contemporary Issues*, Oceana Publications, London, 1982, p 61.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. p 62.

<sup>37</sup> In a contemporary essay, Hasjim Djalal wrote that "the right to be compensated for works undertaken to facilitate passage" should not be confused with an intention by Indonesia to establish tolls. (*Indonesia and the Law of the Sea*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1995, p 327).

generating local revenues from tanker traffic in the straits, may also have helped to ease Malaysian environmental concerns<sup>38</sup>. The change in both Indonesia's and Malaysia's positions generally reflected shortcomings in their enforcement capacity as well as their ability to finance safety measures independently. This necessarily led them back to pursuing cooperation with user-states. In addition, as UNCLOS III progressed, it became clear that many of the coastal states' key objectives, including recognition of the 12 nm territorial sea for coastal states as well as a new category of archipelagic state, would receive recognition under international law. The role of UNCLOS as a confidence-building legal regime through which the interests and concerns of both coastal and maritime states could be mediated was essential to restoring Japan's relations with the straits states to a cooperative track<sup>39</sup>.

For Indonesia, the recognition of its claim to archipelagic status -- Jakarta's primary objective under UNCLOS -- justified a compromise on the application of an innocent passage regime to the Straits of Malacca, especially as the eastern half of the straits fell outside its archipelagic waters claim. For the maritime states at UNCLOS, led by the United States, the *quid pro quo* demanded of the littoral states in return for recognition of many of their claims was to accept a new category of "transit passage", a more liberal regime guaranteeing unfettered movement through straits connecting one high seas area or EEZ with another<sup>40</sup> (see Appendix 2). As UNCLOS took shape, uncertainties that had fuelled suspicions between Japan and the straits states during the Joint Statement period began to give way to the expectation of a common legal framework that would recognise the sovereignty claims of coastal states while upholding freedom of navigation through international straits. Indeed, following Jakarta's adoption of the Law of the Sea in 1985, Indonesian diplomats reverted to referring to the Straits of Malacca as an "international strait"<sup>41</sup>.

#### 1. The Traffic Separation Scheme and Under-Keel Clearance limit.

The next major test of Japan's relations with the straits states came when the VLCC *Shōwa Maru* ran aground in 1975, spilling more than 3,000 tonnes of crude south of Singapore. Although the spill was small in proportion to the tanker's capacity, the

<sup>38</sup> 'What's in it for Them?', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 11, 1971, p 2.

<sup>39</sup> According to Hasjim Djalal, "cooperation between the three states and Japan ... has been very successful, although it is not clear whether it is well-known outside Japan and the three coastal states", *Indonesia and the Law of the Sea*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1995, pp 360-61.

<sup>40</sup> Koh Kheng Lian, *Straits in International Navigation: Contemporary Issues*, Oceana Publications, London, 1982, p 77.



incident remains the worst peacetime spillage in the Straits of Malacca and sparked substantial compensation claims against the Japanese owners from all three straits states. However, the accident was successfully contained as an issue of navigational safety, with minimal political fallout on Japan's relations with the coastal states. The *Shōwa Maru* began a process that resulted in the implementation of the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) and the establishment of the Revolving Fund, which together laid a stable foundation for Japan and the straits states to cooperate on navigational and environmental safety issues thereafter.

There are basically two approaches to improving safety for the passage of large tankers through the Straits of Malacca. The first relies on enhancing the safety parameters of the straits, by conducting surveys and dredging operations to establish optimum routes, designating separate lanes for east and west-bound traffic and installing navigation aids. The second is to impose size and speed restrictions on vessels by setting a minimum under-keel clearance limit. While Japan's preference was for the former approach, the straits states pushed for an under-keel clearance limit, as this placed the onus of responsibility and cost on the vessel owners.

In the wake of the *Shōwa Maru* accident and the donation by the Japanese government of an oil-skimming vessel to Singapore, the Malacca Straits Council hosted a conference on shipping safety in Tokyo which recommended measures to improve safety in the straits, including the TSS and under-keel clearance scheme and the installation of navigational aids<sup>42</sup>. The Japanese Shipowners' Association drafted a set of navigation rules for the MoT, including an instruction to reduce tanker speeds to 10-12 knots. A tripartite Council on Safety of Navigation and Control of Marine Pollution was then formed among the three straits states, which agreed to adopt an under-keel clearance of 3.5 metres (m) throughout the straits and to improve navigational aids further. It was also agreed that the users should bear the full cost of implementing safety measures. Following an extensive consultation process, the IMCO approved the under-keel clearance regulation and a TSS in the straits, in the Singapore Strait and around One Fathom Bank (see Map 10, below). Japan accepted both initiatives, but requested a period of grace to make the necessary alterations to its tanker fleet<sup>43</sup>. The combined

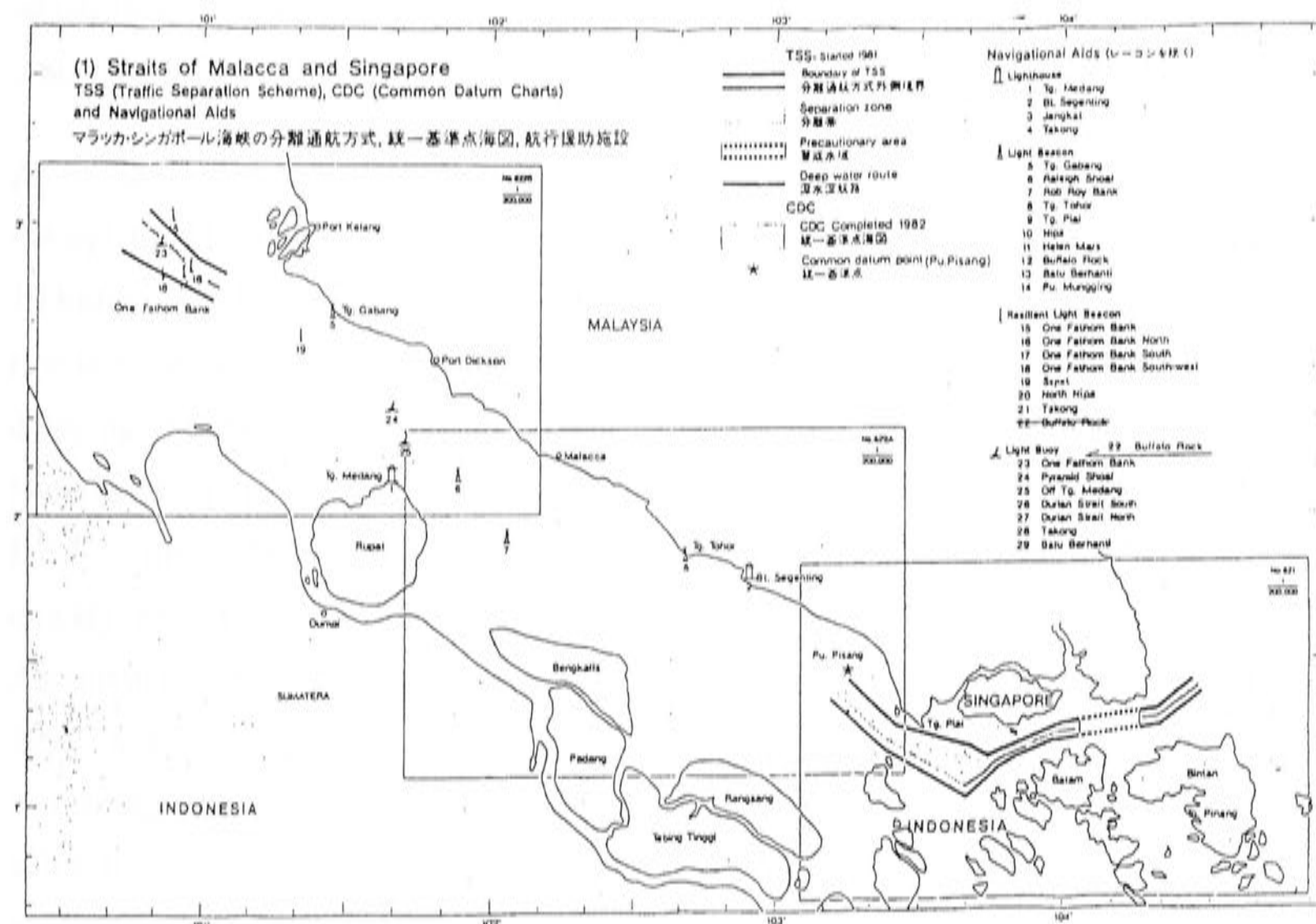
<sup>41</sup> Dino Patti Djalal, *The Geopolitics of Indonesia's Maritime Territorial Policy*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1996, p 129.

<sup>42</sup> Koh Kheng Lian, *Straits in International Navigation: Contemporary Issues*, Oceana Publications, London, 1982, pp 80-83.

<sup>43</sup> In an effort to improve safety standards for ships, since 1978 Japan has granted 'scrap-and-build' subsidies to Japanese shipbuilders to encourage the modernisation of its tanker fleet.

scheme was eventually introduced in May 1981, with financial and technical assistance from Japan. As a result, VLCCs over around 230,000 tons have since diverted through the Lombok Strait, for which Japan mounted joint preparatory survey expeditions with Indonesia in 1974 and 1975<sup>44</sup>.

**Map 10: The Traffic Separation Scheme in the Straits of Malacca**



Source: Ouchi Kazuomi<sup>45</sup>.

The coastal states developed their own individual estimates for an under-keel clearance limit by adding values from three variables; squat (a phenomenon whereby the draught of a vessel increases as the result of a localised reduction of the water level caused by its forward motion), wave action swell, human factors, and a safety margin. An under-keel clearance limit of 3.5m was eventually adopted as a compromise figure between the Indonesian estimate of 4.5m and the Singaporean estimate of 2.0m<sup>46</sup>. A difference of

<sup>44</sup> As noted in Chapter One, K-line is among those shipping firms currently seeking to negotiate a 0.5 m reduction to the under-keel clearance limit. (Interview with Capt. Osuka Yoshihiro, Asst. General Manager, Marine Safety and Environmental Team, 'K'-line, February 28, 2002).

<sup>45</sup> 'Making the Straits Safer: A User's View of Alternative Routes', paper given at the International Conference on the Strait of Malacca: Meeting the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Malaysian Institute of Maritime Affairs, June 14 and 15, 1994.

<sup>46</sup> Singapore's recommended underkeel clearance was 2.5m less than Indonesia's estimated minimum clearance, despite the fact that the Singapore Strait is statistically the most dangerous waterway in the Straits of Malacca. Some commentators have speculated that Indonesia was pursuing its development agenda by making it more economical for large tankers to divert through Lombok, where Jakarta had plans to construct



even one metre carries major commercial implications, since it means that a 250,000 DWT VLCC must reduce its load by 15,000 DWT. On a national scale, this would translate into an annual shortfall in capacity of 10 million tons according to one Japanese estimate<sup>47</sup>. A 1973 estimate in contemporary prices put the cost of diverting Japan's VLCCs over 200,000 DWT through Lombok-Makassar at some 10 million yen per tanker for each voyage, adding \$100-270 million to Japan's annual oil import bill, which then totalled \$3 billion<sup>48</sup>. At that time, Japan operated over 90 tankers in the 200,000-250,000 DWT range.

As of 2001, technical and financial assistance provided by Japan to the straits states through the Malacca Straits Council since 1968 amounted to over 13 billion yen. Of the 10 billion yen disbursed up to 1993; 1.4 billion was allocated to hydrographic surveys (the last conducted in 1978); 1.4 billion for the removal of four shipwrecks; 1 billion for dredging operations; 3.5 billion to install and maintain navigation aids; 502 million for a buoy tender donated to Malaysia in 1975<sup>49</sup>; and 400 million to capitalise the Rolling Fund<sup>50</sup>. Since 1981, the fund has given the straits states the facility to withdraw money quickly to pay for responses in the event of serious spillages<sup>51</sup>. The Petroleum Association of Japan has also funded environmental clean-up exercises in the straits. In 1993, a base was established in Singapore to forward store equipment used for combating oil spills and the three littoral states have developed responses in case of oil spills through the Oil Spill Preparedness and Response (OSPAR) project, financed exclusively by Japan via the Rolling Fund<sup>52</sup>. Other measures to improve safety in the straits have been introduced with Japanese participation through the IMO, including a mandatory ship reporting system -- STRAITREP-- which has been in force in the Straits of Malacca since December 1998. STRAITREP requires all vessels transiting the straits

---

oil storage and docking facilities. (Koh Kheng Lian, *Straits in International Navigation: Contemporary Issues*, Oceana Publications, London, 1982, pp 85, 95).

<sup>47</sup> Ouchi Kazuomi, 'Making the Straits Safer: A User's View of Alternative Routes', paper given at the International Conference on the Strait of Malacca: Meeting the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Malaysian Institute of Maritime Affairs, June 14 and 15, 1994, p 4.

<sup>48</sup> *Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 26, 1973, pp 14-15.

<sup>49</sup> Negotiations have recently been held for the possible replacement of the buoy tender donated to Malaysia.

<sup>50</sup> Ono Akio, 'Japan's Contribution to Safety and Pollution Mitigation in the Straits of Malacca' in Hamzah (ed.), *The Straits of Malacca: International Co-operation in Trade, Funding and Navigational Safety*, Maritime Institute of Malaysia/Pelanduk Publications, 1997, Kuala Lumpur, pp 241-246.

<sup>51</sup> Teh Kong Leong, 'The Revolving Fund -- a Unique Facility', Paper given at the International Conference on the Strait of Malacca: Meeting the Challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Malaysian Institute of Maritime Affairs, Kuala Lumpur, June 14-15, 1994, p 2.

<sup>52</sup> Chia Lin Sien, 'The Strait of Malacca as a Tanker Pipeline: Some Considerations for Northeast Asian Users', Paper given at the International Conference on the Strait of Malacca: Meeting the Challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Malaysian Institute of Maritime Affairs, Kuala Lumpur, June 14-15, 1994, pp 14-17.

to divulge details such as name, call-sign, position, course and speed and whether hazardous cargoes are aboard<sup>53</sup>.

Japanese technical and financial assistance was central to a number of other safety initiatives introduced in the straits. The hydrographic Common Datum Charts, on which the TSS was based, drew mainly from survey data collected jointly by Japan and the straits states from 1969-75. From 1976-79, the Malacca Straits Council compiled data on tidal ranges and currents<sup>54</sup>. In 1978, Japan was involved in a survey of One Fathom Bank to establish a 23m navigable channel to service east-bound traffic. After this survey was completed in November, Japan and the three straits states agreed to the installation of additional navigational aids. In 1979, the MoT agreed to fund the dredging operations required to make the new channels passable<sup>55</sup>. Between 1969 and 1988, the Council installed 39 navigational aids (lighthouses, beacons, buoys and surface radars) in the straits, which have since been maintained and replaced as necessary<sup>56</sup>. The Malacca Straits Council and the Japan International Cooperation Agency have also discussed, as part of the ODA programme, a further round of surveys to monitor wrecks and shoals in the straits<sup>57</sup>.

Japan also linked the legal position of the Straits of Malacca under UNCLOS to its own policy on the UN Law of the Sea. In May 1977, under the terms of the Law on the Territorial Sea, Japan extended its territorial seas to 12 nm, but opted to retain an outer limit of 3 nm in the four international straits abutting Japanese territory -- Sōya, Tsugarū, Tsushima, and Osumi<sup>58</sup>. This self-limiting ordinance was to avoid undermining its negotiating position with Indonesia and Malaysia by appearing to endorse the enclosure of international straits within territorial waters. The linkage was admitted by the government of the day:

<sup>53</sup> The Singapore Conference on the Straits of Malacca and Singapore - Issues, Perspectives and Post-Conference Developments; [www.sils.org/seminar/1996-straits-overview.htm](http://www.sils.org/seminar/1996-straits-overview.htm).

<sup>54</sup> Ono Akio, 'Japan's Contribution to Safety and Pollution Mitigation in the Straits of Malacca' in Hamzah (ed.), *The Straits of Malacca: International Co-operation in Trade, Funding and Navigational Safety*, Maritime Institute of Malaysia/Pelanduk Publications, 1997, Kuala Lumpur, p 242.

<sup>55</sup> Koh Kheng Lian, *Straits in International Navigation: Contemporary Issues*, Oceana Publications, London, 1982, pp 90-91.

<sup>56</sup> In October 1990, shipping radars were installed in the Singapore Strait, with the data feeding into the vessel traffic information system.

<sup>57</sup> Ono Akio, 'Japan's Contribution to Safety and Pollution Mitigation in the Straits of Malacca' in Hamzah (ed.), *The Straits of Malacca: International Co-operation in Trade, Funding and Navigational Safety*, Maritime Institute of Malaysia/Pelanduk Publications, 1997, Kuala Lumpur, pp 242-43.

<sup>58</sup> Akaha Tsuneo, *Japan in Global Ocean Politics*, University of Hawaii Press and Law of the Sea Institute, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1985, pp 119-23.



From the comprehensive viewpoint of the national interest of Japan, which imports the majority of its resources from overseas and depends heavily on trade and maritime shipping in particular, it is necessary to ensure free passage of merchant ships and large-sized tankers through the Straits of Malacca and elsewhere. ... Therefore, as a provisional measure, for the time being, we shall not alter the present situation with respect to the so-called international straits of Japan<sup>59</sup>.

## 2. A Kra canal?

Most re-routing alternatives to the Strait of Malacca involve existing waterways passing through the Indonesian archipelago (see Chapter One). However, Japan has intermittently expressed interest in a canal or 'land-bridge' across the Isthmus of Kra in Thailand. The original idea of a canal, which dates back to the 17th century, has been revived in several forms. The land-bridge concept involves the construction of a pipeline and overland railway to connect terminals on either side of the isthmus. Although this would represent a saving of up to 1,000 nm on the Straits of Malacca sea route (see Map 11, below), it would only be a worthwhile option for "Japan-bound VLCCs which would otherwise use Lombok", according to Swinnerton (1996)<sup>60</sup>.

**Map 11:** Proposed route of the Kra Canal compared with the Straits of Malacca



In 1971, a Japanese approach was made to the military government in Thailand requesting permission to conduct a survey for possible routes across the Isthmus. The

<sup>59</sup> Quoted in Ibid. p 127.

<sup>60</sup> Russ Swinnerton, 'A Description of Regional Shipping Routes: navigational and operational considerations', *Maritime Studies*, No. 87, March/April 1996, pp 10-22.

plan, similar to the land-bridge concept, envisaged 500,000-ton tankers operating shuttle runs between the Persian Gulf and a terminal at the Andaman Sea end of the pipeline. Oil would then be pumped to the Gulf of Thailand, where 200,000-DWT tankers would service the route to and from Japan. Construction was estimated to be four times cheaper than that of excavating a canal across the Kra. However, the successor to the Thanom-Praphat regime, which fell from power in 1973, did not pursue the project.<sup>61</sup>

The Mitsubishi Research Institute announced an interest in a Kra canal in 1986, when it included its own canal blueprint as part of a long list of infrastructure 'mega-projects' in the Global Infrastructure Fund. Some of the proposed schemes in the Fund amounted to little more than an exercise in corporate prestige. A proposal to construct a canal within 10 years using nuclear blast earth-clearance methods was rejected on environmental grounds. However, a Mitsubishi proposal in 2000 to develop port facilities and an industrial development zone, in conjunction with a canal, received serious attention from Thai politicians eager to revive Thailand's post-1997 crisis economy with a national-scale construction project. Development costs were estimated at \$25 billion to construct a two-way canal 102 kilometres (km) long, 25m deep and 400m wide<sup>62</sup>. Unlike previous proposals that assumed the canal would have to be funded with external capital, it was suggested, at a seminar on the Kra Canal Project held at Hat Yai on January 15, 2000, that the proportion of foreign funding required would be as little as 20 per cent, with the remainder being sourced through a public flotation and Thai government funds<sup>63</sup>.

Proponents of the canal have claimed that navigational conditions would be less hazardous than in the Straits of Malacca and that it would be less prone to piracy or terrorist attack. It has also been claimed that the financial saving, relative to the cost of passage through the Malacca and Lombok Straits would range from \$37,000-120,000 per sailing. However, a 1973 survey report, based on a 12-year construction timeframe, for a canal of equivalent length but only half the width predicted that the project would take more than 50 years to recoup its start-up costs<sup>64</sup>. Serious environmental objections have also been raised, which democratic governments in Thailand are less able to ignore than their military predecessors. Nonetheless, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's

<sup>61</sup> 'Kra Canal Project', at: [www.kracanal.or.th/problemeng1.htm](http://www.kracanal.or.th/problemeng1.htm)

<sup>62</sup> 'The Kra Canal: Thailand's \$25 billion question', *Asia Times* online; at [www.atimes.com/editor/A10Ba01.html](http://www.atimes.com/editor/A10Ba01.html).

<sup>63</sup> Supradit Kanwanich, 'Kra Canal Project: To dig or not to dig' *Bangkok Post*, January 23, 2000.

<sup>64</sup> Yaacov Y.I. Vertzberger, *Coastal States, Regional Powers, Superpowers and the Malacca-Singapore Straits*, Institute of East Asian Studies Research Paper, University of California, 1984, pp 78-82.



administration revived the canal proposal in late January 2003, by offering a contract to the Hong Kong-registered Phuket Pass Project (PPP) consortium to conduct a \$50 million dollar feasibility study. Japanese and Australian interests are believed to be the major financiers behind PPP, which has met local criticism due to the personal links between its chairman Adisak Techa-adisak and Charoon Wutikarn, the head of the government's study committee into the project. It is alleged that PPP's connections with the government ensured that it was awarded the contract without competitors. PPP's proposal, thought to be worth up to 35 billion dollars, envisages the construction of a trans-Isthmus canal concentrating on the ports of Chumphon and Songkhla in the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea towns of Ranong and Satun as possible sites<sup>65</sup>.

Doubts persist as to the commercial viability or additional security benefits of a Kra canal, although as traffic expands in the Straits of Malacca safety concerns could become more important (see Chapter One). Expressions of interest from Thai and Japanese-funded preliminary studies have, at a minimum, provided Japanese industry and officials with a form of insurance against any future attempts by Malaysia or Indonesia to place further restrictions on tanker traffic passing through the straits or to charge tolls.

## **V. Indonesia's archipelagic doctrine as a diplomatic challenge.**

Jakarta's political and military elites have tended to attach great importance to controlling surrounding waters and airspace. This aim is closely identified with the security and defence of the state, reflecting concerns over great power naval involvement arising from Indonesia's geostrategic location; doubts about the fragile nature of national unity arising from the country's fragmented geography; a historically honed suspicion of outside intervention in Indonesia's internal conflicts by extra-regional powers; and a determination to maximise Jakarta's strategic leverage and aspirations to regional leadership<sup>66</sup>. These concerns led to the formation of an archipelagic doctrine, first expressed in a December 1957 Declaration asserting that all waters within baselines connecting the outermost points of the Republic were "integral parts of the territory of the Indonesian state"<sup>67</sup>. In 1960, this Declaration was enacted

<sup>65</sup> 'Hong Kong firm gets study deal', *Bangkok Post*, January 21, 2003: at [www.bangkokpost.com/210103\\_News/21Jan2003\\_news06.html](http://www.bangkokpost.com/210103_News/21Jan2003_news06.html)

<sup>66</sup> Dino Patti Djalal, *The Geopolitics of Indonesia's Maritime Territorial Policy*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1996, p 102.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* p 29.

into law by the Act on Indonesian Waters Number Four (PRP/1960)<sup>68</sup>. The archipelagic doctrine, or *Wawasan Nusantara*, is designed to forge a unified identity and a viable state from over 13,000 islands and dozens of ethnic and linguistic groups as well as to gain control over surrounding marine resources, expanding Indonesia's "national territory" from 2 million square km to 5 million. Thus the Indonesian government linked sovereignty over archipelagic waters to "the country's territorial integrity, the unity and social cohesion of its people as well as national development".<sup>69</sup> For these reasons, Indonesia's policy-making elites view the archipelagic doctrine as "vital to our continued survival as a nation"<sup>70</sup>.

As the primary alternative route for tankers unable to pass through the Straits of Malacca, and for most of the bulk ore trade between Australia and Japan, Lombok-Makassar is the second most important strait in Southeast Asia for Japan's trade<sup>71</sup>. These straits, together with Sunda and Ombai-Wetar, fall wholly within Indonesia's archipelagic waters claim, which received recognition from UNCLOS III in 1982, as well as a new category of "archipelagic sea lanes passage", devised to cover routes normally used for international navigation through archipelagos (see Appendix 2).

The military security focus of Jakarta's position on freedom of navigation and Indonesia's expressions of "sympathy with those who need international trade, because we are also dependent on international trade" simplified the task for Japanese negotiators at UNCLOS. This position was in contrast to Jakarta's suspicion of "big powers" intent on pursuing "global strategy". According to Hasjim Djalal, Indonesia's foremost maritime legal authority and negotiator, it was the intention of Indonesian interlocutors at UNCLOS that merchant shipping would be free to transit the archipelago without restriction, with the exception of the largest categories of oil tankers and vessels carrying hazardous cargoes which demonstrate "the need for a more

<sup>68</sup> Maj. Gen. Subijakto, 'Indonesia's Perception of SLOC in Southeast Asia', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, November 1989, pp 27-31.

<sup>69</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs Press Release Concerning Indonesia's Archipelagic Sea Lanes, No. 28/PR/VI/98, June 15, 1998: [www.deplu.go.id/english2/pr28-98.htm](http://www.deplu.go.id/english2/pr28-98.htm).

<sup>70</sup> According to Hasjim Djalal, "The sad history of our people during the colonial domination had indicated to us that whenever the waters between the islands were regarded as a separating factor, the whole Indonesian nation disintegrated. In fact, this was used as a means by previous dominating powers to subdue the nation. We have learned the lesson that the unity of Indonesia as a nation can only be preserved by the archipelagic concept". (*Indonesia and the Law of the Sea*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1995, p 318).

<sup>71</sup> Chia Lin Sien, in Hamzah (ed.), *The Straits of Malacca: International Co-operation in Trade, Funding and Navigational Safety*, Maritime Institute of Malaysia/Pelanduk Publications, 1997, Kuala Lumpur, p 104.



regulated passage”<sup>72</sup>. The prospect that the coastal states in Southeast Asia would be tempted to block commercial navigation is rejected by Djalal as a “fallacy”, invoked by maritime states as “a tactical argument during the Law of the Sea negotiations”. According to one Western observer, as long as Indonesia remains reliant on Japan as an export market for oil and gas, as well as for in-flows of aid and investment, the deliberate obstruction of Japan’s sea communications by Jakarta or other Southeast Asian states would be “akin to cutting their own throat”<sup>73</sup>. Hasjim Djalal echoes the logic of economic inter-dependence as a deterrent to unilateral action against Japan:

The Japanese would like to have unimpeded passage through the straits for their own shipping, for their imported resources, and for their exports. It is in the Japanese interest to cooperate with the three coastal states, and it is in the latter’s interests to co-operate with Japan as well<sup>74</sup>.

#### 1. Sea lane closures.

Indonesia has closed straits used by international shipping four times; in 1958, 1964, 1978 and 1988<sup>75</sup>. The first two closures were aimed at restricting the movement of British and Dutch naval vessels during periods of conflict or tension. Indonesia’s motivation for the phased 48-hour closure of the Sunda and Lombok Straits in 1988, ostensibly to conduct naval gunnery drills, has been seen variously as a signal of Jakarta’s displeasure over Saudi oil-pricing policies or aimed at Japan after it diversified its oil purchases away from Indonesia<sup>76</sup>. However, a more plausible explanation is that by temporarily closing the straits, the military, possibly in coordination with the Foreign Ministry, was testing international reaction to a legal precedent for suspending passage<sup>77</sup>. At the time, the assertion of Defence Minister Benny Moerdani that Indonesia was exercising its “sovereign right” prompted a qualification from Foreign Minister Ali Alatas that the Sunda and Lombok straits were “part of our archipelagic waters, albeit not quite full national waters”.

<sup>72</sup> Hasjim Djalal, *Indonesia and the Law of the Sea*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1995, pp 326-327.

<sup>73</sup> Daniel Coulter, ‘The Economics of SLOC Protection; an Overvalued Mission’, Eleventh International Conference on the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC) Studies, Tokyo, November 17-18, 1997, p 4.

<sup>74</sup> Hasjim Djalal, *Indonesia and the Law of the Sea*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1995, pp 360-361.

<sup>75</sup> John McBeth, ‘Troubled Waters’, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, December 29, 1994 and January 5, 1995, p 18.

<sup>76</sup> *Defender* Vol. 5, No. 4, Summer, 1988/89; and Nayan Chanda, ‘Troubled Waters’, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 10, 1988, p 18.

<sup>77</sup> Dino Patti Djalal, *The Geopolitics of Indonesia’s Maritime Territorial Policy*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1996, p 130.

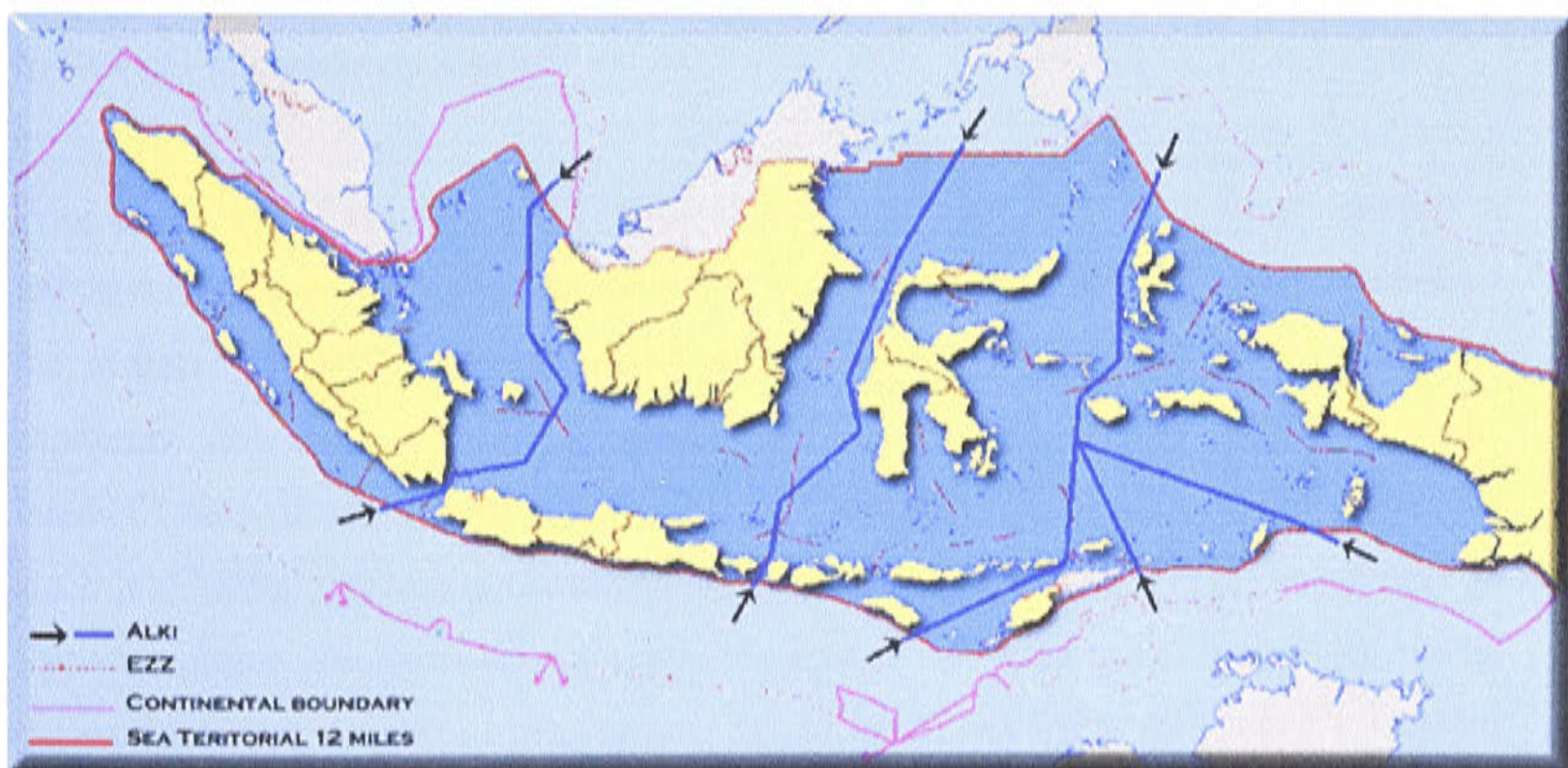


The Japanese authorities coordinated their diplomatic response with Australia, but did not officially protest against the closure until the next year, following protests from West Germany, the United States and Australia. As the closures resulted in little or no disruption to traffic through the straits, the MOFA did not register the incident as a threat to Japan's shipping interests<sup>78</sup>. With a view to the risk of being denied access to various Southeast Asian straits in future, the Japanese shipping firm 'K'-line has studied alternative routes through the archipelago via the Sunda Strait, Lombok and via Maluku. However, the company has not studied the much longer diversion around Australia<sup>79</sup>.

## 2. Archipelagic sea lanes.

In August 1996, two years after UNCLOS had entered into force, Indonesia informed the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee that it had nominated three archipelagic sea lanes (ASLs), each on a north-south axis: i) through the Sunda and Karimata Straits to the South China Sea (ALKI-I); ii) through the Lombok and Makassar Straits and Sulawesi Sea (ALKI-II); and iii) a tri-pronged ASL connecting the Maluku Sea with the Ombai and Wetar Straits and Arafura Sea (ALKI-III)<sup>80</sup>. Despite implicitly restricting archipelagic passage along an east-west axis, Jakarta maintained in June 1998 that "for the time being, the three north-south lanes are sufficient"<sup>81</sup> (See Map 12, below).

**Map 12:** Indonesia's Archipelagic Sea Lanes<sup>82</sup>



<sup>78</sup> Interview with Umemoto Kazuyoshi, Director, First International Organizations Division, Economic Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 1999.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Captain Osuka Yoshihiro, Assistant General Manager, Marine Safety and Environmental Team, K-line.

<sup>80</sup> International Maritime Organisation, Maritime Safety Committee, MSC 67/7/2, 67th Session, August 30, 1996.

<sup>81</sup> Felix Chan, 'Jakarta to Open Three Sea Lanes for International Passage', *Shipping News*, June 17, 1998.

<sup>82</sup> Source: Department of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Republic of Indonesia:

[www.dkp.go.id/ie/peta/Geografis%20Laut.htm](http://www.dkp.go.id/ie/peta/Geografis%20Laut.htm)



The United States and Australia were the first nations to express concern about the proposed ASLs and the implications for (principally naval) vessels aiming to sail laterally through the archipelago, from Darwin to Singapore via the Java Sea for example<sup>83</sup>. The absence of an east-west ASL is of less obvious economic importance to Japan than south-north ASLs, which include the heavily trafficked Sunda and Lombok-Makassar routes. Nevertheless, it is still claimed that the restriction of merchant shipping to just three ASLs would result in “additional costs which would have to be borne in higher commodity prices”<sup>84</sup>.

Among the maritime states most obviously affected, Australia sought consultations with Indonesia through the IMO over the designation of ASLs prior to the meetings of the IMO’s Maritime Safety Committee and Sub-Committee on Safety of Navigation, respectively in December 1996 and December 1997. Indonesia’s response was to recognise the IMO’s authority only insofar as it addresses the technical aspects of navigational safety, such as monitoring and surveillance of sea and air traffic through the ASLs<sup>85</sup>. In May 1998, the plenary meeting of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee endorsed Indonesia’s ASLs proposal, paving the way for its entry into force from 1999. Wishing to avoid overt criticism of Indonesia and with little direct interest in lateral communications through the archipelago, Tokyo’s response to the north-south ASL proposal followed a familiar pattern of reliance on other maritime states to press their freedom of navigation concerns<sup>86</sup>.

Prior to the fall of the Soeharto regime in May 1998, the issue of political stability in Indonesia had been considered by Japan to be “irrelevant in the case of the Lombok or the Malacca Straits”<sup>87</sup>. Such confidence has diminished sharply with Indonesia’s economic downturn and rising social and political instability marked by the intensification of inter-communal violence and regional rebellions in provinces such as Aceh and Maluku, which are located near major sea lanes. Since 1998, an upsurge in maritime piracy (the focus of analysis in the next chapter) has made Indonesian waters the world’s most dangerous environment for international shipping, while the October

<sup>83</sup> ‘Water of Strife’, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, February 29, 1996, p 30.

<sup>84</sup> Russ Swinnerton, ‘A Description of Regional Shipping Routes: navigational and operational considerations’, *Maritime Studies*, No. 87, March/April 1996, p 21.

<sup>85</sup> Hasjim Djalal, *Indonesia and the Law of the Sea*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1995, pp 239-40.

<sup>86</sup> Russell Skelton, ‘Jakarta shipping plan sparks anger’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, June 5, 1996, p 15.

<sup>87</sup> Ouchi Kazuomi, ‘Making the Straits Safer: A User’s View of Alternative Routes’, paper given at the International Conference on the Strait of Malacca: Meeting the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Malaysian Institute of Maritime Affairs, June 14 and 15, 1994.

2002 Bali bombings of Western tourist targets underscored the risk that Islamist terrorist groups operating within the country could stage a repeat of the al-Qaida-linked attack off Yemen on the French tanker, *Limburg*, by targeting shipping moving through Indonesian waters (see Chapters Two and Seven). For Japan, along with other states with a security interest in maintaining maritime access to the archipelago, the growing and multi-faceted threat posed by lawlessness and 'rogue' elements within the Indonesian state has shifted the focus of concern away from the potential risks posed by the government's archipelagic policies to a more basic concern over its capacity to maintain political stability.

At the same time, resurgent inter-communal violence and secessionist movements and the forced separation of East Timor from the Republic in November 1999 have revived concerns within Indonesia's political and military elite about foreign interference in the archipelago, leading to a more assertive posture on the movement of foreign naval craft, particularly near politically sensitive provinces. Reflecting this trend, a US warship *en route* to East Timor was challenged near Maluku in October 2000, on suspicion of providing arms to local separatists<sup>88</sup>. Also, in late May 2001, Indonesian Navy vessels reportedly opened fire on two Panamanian-registered dredgers, contracted to work on reclamation projects by the Singaporean government, while in an Indonesian shipping lane near Singapore<sup>89</sup>.

## **VI. Nuclear shipments.**

Japan has also faced legal challenges from coastal states related to its shipment of enriched nuclear fuels. Since Japan began importing mixed-oxide (MOX) fuels from Europe in 1992, governments and private pressure groups in states along the route of shipments have sought to exclude these nuclear materials from their EEZ or territorial waters<sup>90</sup>. Reflecting the shift that has occurred in definitions of security since the end of the Cold War, Japan's policy of importing plutonium has itself been described as a threat to Asia-Pacific SLOC<sup>91</sup>. In response to opposition from Malaysia and Indonesia, Japan was forced to route its first shipment, aboard the *Akatsuki Maru*, around Australia

<sup>88</sup> 'Jakarta Challenges US Warship', *The Australian*, October 29, 2000, p 7.

<sup>89</sup> 'Indonesian Navy fires at dredgers off Singapore', Reuters News Service, June 1, 2002.

<sup>90</sup> This includes the government of South Korea, which expressed its concern to Tokyo in July 1999 that MOX fuel might be delivered to Japanese ports via the Korea (Tsushima) Strait. ('ROK Expresses Concern Over Plutonium Shipment', Yonhap News Agency, July 12, 1999).

<sup>91</sup> Ji Guoxing, 'SLOC Security in the Asia Pacific', Center Occasional Paper, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu, February 2000; at [www.apcss.org/Paper\\_SLOC\\_Occasional.htm](http://www.apcss.org/Paper_SLOC_Occasional.htm)



instead of its preferred route via the Straits of Malacca<sup>92</sup>. Prior to its departure, Foreign Minister Alatas stated, "we cannot close international sea lanes, but we have called on Japan, even pressed Japan, not to use Indonesian waters". A Japanese request to use the Lombok Strait was also refused<sup>93</sup>.

The four shipments that have taken place from Europe thus far have followed varied routes illustrating the flexibility of shipping compared with overland modes of transport. The *Akatsuki Maru* sailed from Cherbourg, via the Cape of Good Hope, south about Australia, through the Tasman Sea and southwest Pacific to Japan. The shipment aboard the *Pacific Pintail* sailed from Cherbourg, via the South Atlantic and Cape Horn across the Pacific. The third vessel, the *Pacific Teal*, repeated the route used by the *Akatsuki Maru*, while the final shipment left Cherbourg aboard the *Pacific Swan* and sailed to Japan via the Panama canal<sup>94</sup>. A fifth, return shipment took place in late 2002, when a consignment of MOX fuel originally delivered in 1999 was returned to British Nuclear Fuels Limited in the United Kingdom via the route used by the *Akatsuki Maru* and *Pacific Teal*. The use of varied routes kept secret for security reasons, has enabled Japan to carry out these infrequent shipments largely on schedule, albeit at the price of alienating a large number of coastal states.

The rights of coastal states, under UNCLOS, to enforce pollution restrictions within their EEZ, or to uphold unilateral or regional nuclear-free zones, has been invoked by several coastal states along the route of the shipments. While small states such as Mauritius have had no choice but to confine their opposition to diplomatic channels, some Australasian and South American countries have dispatched naval or coast guard vessels to ensure the nuclear cargo ships remain outside their EEZ. A growing possibility that Japan's nuclear programme may be curtailed, on technical as well as domestic political grounds, means that this particular aspect of its SLOC security matters could decline in importance.

---

<sup>92</sup> Subsequent shipments have been transported aboard purpose-built PNTL vessels including the *Pacific Swan* (1979), the *Pacific Teal* (1982) and the *Pacific Pintail* (1987). These vessels incorporate such safety features as double hulling, twin engines, radiation-monitoring systems, fire-fighting systems and advanced navigation and communication equipment, in accordance with IMO and International Atomic Energy Agency standards. They are also armed with naval guns and manned by a UK-trained security crew.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Lt. Gen. Shikata Toshiyuki, Tokyo, March 7, 1999.

<sup>94</sup> Grant Hewison, Shipping and Regional Security, in Sam Bateman (ed.) *Maritime cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region: Current Situation and Prospects*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, No. 132, Australian National University Press, 1999, Canberra, pp 145-46.

### **Conclusion.**

The limits of Japan's influence and shortcomings in its diplomacy were demonstrated in November 1971, when Malaysia and Indonesia jointly declared their intention to "de-internationalise" the Straits of Malacca following Tokyo's push to secure representation for itself in an international supervisory regime governing the straits. From that low-point, Japan, acting 'privately' through the non-official Malacca Straits Council, bilaterally at the state level, and multilaterally through the IMO, has steadily built up cooperative relationships with the key straits states. These ties have generally enabled Japan to balance its interests in safety and economy with the coastal states' sovereignty concerns and desire to minimise their exposure to environmental problems, with the exception of strong opposition to Japan's nuclear cargoes. Japan's status as the only user state to have set up an institutionalised funding mechanism has won it good will among the riparian states in the Straits of Malacca, as has its provision of technical assistance.

Although there remains some anxiety in Japan as to the potential for UNCLOS to lead to 'creeping jurisdiction' in maritime Southeast Asia, no major legal restrictions on the navigation of Japanese or other vessels using the Straits of Malacca have been introduced since the under-keel clearance regulation and TSS came into effect. No Asia-Pacific state has opposed the principles of freedom of navigation or innocent passage, while UNCLOS has given Japan grounds to defend itself under international law against any future attempt by signatories to introduce tolls<sup>95</sup>. In this way, the Law of the Sea can be regarded as a maritime confidence-building measure, reducing uncertainties about the effects of coastal state jurisdiction on freedom of navigation and obviating the need for Japan to compensate by seeking a military presence in the region. Moreover, the establishment of a universal international maritime legal framework makes it less likely that there will be a repeat crisis over the legal status of the Straits of Malacca.

Despite relying on other maritime states to press the more contentious aspects of navigational access to Southeast Asia's sea lanes, Japanese initiatives utilising economic and diplomatic influence since the 1970s have been quietly effective in pre-empting legal moves by coastal states to restrict access to commercial shipping and at creating a cooperative framework for addressing navigational safety in the Malacca



Strait. Nonetheless, such efforts have limited scope for mitigating threats to its shipping interests in Southeast Asia posed by piracy, terrorism and regional conflicts in the South China Sea. Japan's perceptions and responses to these conventional and unconventional SLOC threats in the post-Cold War era are explored in the following two chapters.

---

<sup>95</sup> While Article 26(2) makes provision for "payment only for specific services rendered to the ship, Article 26(1) states that 'No charge may be levied upon foreign ships by reason only of their passage through the territorial seas'".

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Japan's Post-Cold War SLOC Security: Piracy and Terrorism-at-Sea

#### Introduction.

This chapter has two purposes. The first, in Section I, is to review the major post-Cold War changes and developments within Japan's security environment, particularly regarding sea lane security and to look at how recent Japanese governments have responded to altered strategic circumstances in terms of alliance and defence policy. In Section II, Japan's responses to maritime piracy and terrorism-at-sea are examined as a case study in non-state actor threats to Japan's sea lines of communication (SLOC). This follows on from the overview of piracy and terrorism-at-sea in Chapter Two. In Chapter Eight, a second post-Cold War case study profiles Japan's state-level military SLOC security concerns, concentrating on emerging views of China as a potential strategic threat, and the perceived impact of a regional conflict occurring near Japan's major SLOC, including the existing maritime threat posed by North Korea. China's alleged involvement in the 'military' category piracy is dealt with as part of Japan's piracy concerns in this chapter for the sake of clarity.

This chapter argues that Japan's post-Cold War security posture, after undergoing a period of disorientation and dislocation in the early 1990s, came under the influence of rising 'realist' perceptions about Japan's security environment in reaction to a series of regional security crises mid-decade. The resulting strategic uncertainty brought a renewed focus on the US-Japan Alliance among Japanese security policy-makers, the restructuring of the Self Defense Forces (SDF) to suit a more fluid security environment and the pursuit of multilateral and bilateral security dialogue and linkages. Perceptions of potential maritime threats identified during the official review of defence policy undertaken in 1994 are analysed, together with how this shaped changes to the force structure of the Maritime Self Defense Forces (MSDF), as defined in the revised 1995 National Defense Programme Outline, or new *taikō*. A profile of generalised perceptions regarding Japan's post-Cold War sea lane security among policymakers and analysts completes Section I.

The case study in Section II begins by evaluating conflicting data on the scale of the piracy and maritime terrorism threats confronting Japan, before profiling Japanese policy responses at state, private and multilateral levels. Japan's responses to terrorism are further explored in the context of the MSDF's deployment of a flotilla to the Arabian



Sea in the wake of the September 11 attacks in the United States and the likely implications this has for Japan's future approaches to SLOC security. Although the case study demonstrates that maritime piracy is widely perceived as a security threat in Japan, it also shows that attempts to involve Japan directly in anti-piracy patrols in Southeast Asia and to support anti-terrorism efforts in the Arabian Sea and Gulf region reflect their use partly as pretexts for developing an expanded Japanese security role.

### **I. Japan's post-Cold War defence and security.**

As shown, sea lane defence served primarily as a political rationale for force modernisation and deepening military cooperation with the United States during the late Cold War period. This occurred in the context of a perceived, proximate threat posed by the build-up of the Soviet Union's maritime defence capabilities. By the end of the Cold War, the SDF were approaching the force levels set out in the *taikō*, and these were fully achieved in all categories by 1995. As a result of sea lane defence, the MSDF emerged at the end of the Cold War with 62 principal surface combatants (more than the Royal Navy), 16 submarines and 30 mine warfare ships. More than half of its authorised total of 16 squadrons of fixed-wing antisubmarine warfare (ASW) aircraft were equipped with P-3Cs, with the inventory eventually reaching 100 as the last P-2Js were retired<sup>1</sup>.

The effects of sea lane defence on major SDF acquisitions continue into the present. *Kongō*, with a loaded displacement of 9,485 tons, became the first Aegis-radar equipped destroyer commissioned into MSDF service in 1993 and the first to be acquired outside the US Navy. Similarly, the plans of the Air Self Defense Forces (ASDF) to acquire Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACs) aircraft, which had also been linked to "burden-sharing issues and the SLOC defence agreement"<sup>2</sup> led to an order for the first two of four E-767s being placed in December 1992, with Japan's defence planners expressing their preference for an airframe "that has a range that can fly to the Spratlys"<sup>3</sup>. The gradual entry into service of 130 F-2 support fighters, the costly and problematic product of the FS-X joint development programme with the United States, promises to significantly boost the anti-ship capabilities of the ASDF<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Fleet Air Force P-3Cs conduct patrols under the coordination of ASW operation centres at Hachinohe, Atsugi, Kanoya and Naha. (Usui Naoaki, 'Japanese Navy Stresses Updates ASW Capability', *Defense News*, September 9, 1991, p 6).

<sup>2</sup> Norman D Levin, Mark Lorell, and Arthur Alexander, *The Wary Warriors: Future Directions in Japanese Security Policies*, Rand, Santa Monica, 1993, pp 62-63.

<sup>3</sup> Asahi Shimbun, December 2, 1995; and Lam Peng Er, 'Japan and the Spratlys Dispute: Aspirations and Limitations', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 36, October 1996, p 1009.

<sup>4</sup> Alan Stephens, 'Japanese Aerospace Power', *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter*, January 2000, p 17.



Upon achievement of the *taikō* force levels, the MSDF had approximately twice as many destroyers as the US Seventh Fleet and over four times as many P-3Cs. Despite emerging from the Cold War with the largest Asian navy behind the fast-deteriorating Russian Far Eastern Fleet, a 1993 RAND study judged the MSDF to be weak in the areas of fleet air defence, power projection, amphibious operations and long-range submarine operations, partly as a result of its increasing integration with the US Seventh Fleet<sup>5</sup>. As a result of the MSDF's single-minded concentration on navy-to-navy cooperation within the US-Japan Alliance, little effort had been made in the 1980s to develop a joint operational doctrine or exercise programme with the other Self Defense Forces. For example, the first joint SDF drill was conducted only in November 1998, on Io Jima<sup>6</sup>. The lack of jointness compounded weaknesses in the MSDF's capabilities. Regarding air defence, for example, SDF doctrine stipulates that escort vessels will conduct air defence to protect vessels at sea while the ASDF will "conduct air defence operations within its capabilities"<sup>7</sup>. To compensate for the MSDF's lack of organic air cover, ASDF F-15s forward-based on Io Jima (with an unrefuelled combat radius of 1,000 nautical miles, nm) could provide a significant level of protection for the Self Defense Fleet. However, despite the conclusion of the official *yojō bōkū* ('air defence over the sea') study, the ASDF has continued to concentrate mainly on territorial air defence<sup>8</sup>.

Japan's ability to respond to the emerging challenges of the post-Cold War era was found wanting more immediately in terms of the 'software' of political constraints binding the SDF's use than in terms of lacunae in the military hardware built up during the Cold War. Having been slow to accept US claims of an intensified Soviet threat to Japan's sea lanes in the late 1970s, the Japan Defense Agency (JDA) proved equally cautious about recognising the end of the Cold War. Defence white papers as late as 1995 identified a potential threat to "sea lanes around Japan" posed by Russia's modernising Far Eastern maritime capabilities<sup>9</sup>. Citing concerns over Russia's residual capabilities, North Korea's unpredictability and uncertainty over China's long-term

<sup>5</sup> Norman D Levin, Mark Lorell, and Arthur Alexander, *The Wary Warriors: Future Directions in Japanese Security Policies*, Rand, Santa Monica, 1993, pp 49-56.

<sup>6</sup> *Defense of Japan 2000*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, p 345.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p 78.

<sup>8</sup> *Shiiren Bōei to Kaikyō Fūsa* ('Sealane Defence and Straits Blockade'), *Seiron*, July 1983, pp 66-67; and interview with Adm. Sakonjo Naotoshi, MSDF (Retd), Research Institute for Peace and Security, Tokyo, February 12, 1999.

<sup>9</sup> *Defense of Japan 1995*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, pp 45-49.



intentions, 'realist' Japanese scholars, such as Sato Seizaburo, remained sceptical about whether an end of the Cold War could be declared in Northeast Asia<sup>10</sup>.

The first test of the ability of Japan's security framework to respond to post-Cold War realities came in August 1990, even before the collapse of the Soviet Union. Requests from the United States for Japan to contribute militarily to the international coalition being assembled to eject Iraqi forces from Kuwait came as a shock to Japanese leaders, exposing the undeveloped state of the government's crisis decision-making machinery and a level of 'burden-sharing' expectation that the existing legal framework could not support<sup>11</sup>. The ability of the already politically weak government led by Prime Minister Kaifu Toshiki to respond decisively to the Gulf Crisis was hindered by an alignment of opposition parties on the left, resistant to any involvement in US military interventions, and conservatives resentful of US pressure on economic matters<sup>12</sup>. Attempts to enact a bill to enable the SDF to participate in United Nations (UN) peace-keeping operations were subject to obstruction by opposition parties in the Diet. Tokyo's ultimate pledge of \$13 billion towards funding the US-led campaign did little more than to confirm negative views of Tokyo's 'cheque-book diplomacy'. The significance of the post-*bellum* dispatch of an MSDF mine-sweeping flotilla to the Gulf in April 1991 was similarly dismissed as tokenism, even though the first overseas operational deployment of the MSDF represented a momentous policy departure in domestic political terms<sup>13</sup>.

Japan's 'failure' to respond to the Gulf Crisis provided the impetus for a review of defence policy, but political inertia and the transition, in August 1993, to the first non-Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) government since 1955, meant that an official review of the 1976 *taikō* was not ordered until February 1994. However, the Gulf War did give rise to a more immediate initiative on the part of the LDP politician Ozawa Ichiro, who launched a Special Study Group within the party in June 1991 to analyse *Japan's Role in the International Community* (*kokusai shakai ni okeru nihon no yakuwari*). The Special Study Group Draft Report, released in February 1992, focussed on the collective

<sup>10</sup> See for example, Sato Seizaburo, 'Security in the Asia-Pacific Region: Threats, Risks and Opportunities', *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 1; No. 1, 1994; and Nishimura Shigeki, 'Transformation of the U.S.-Japan Defense Posture: The New Soviet Challenge', International Institute for Global Peace (IIGP) Policy Paper, October 1991.

<sup>11</sup> Courtney Purrington, 'Tokyo's Policy Response During the Gulf War', *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 65, 1992, p 167.

<sup>12</sup> Ian Gow, 'Civil-Military Relations in Contemporary Japan -- Civilian Control of Whose Military?', *The Japan Society*, Vol. 136 (Winter) 2001, p 9.

<sup>13</sup> The 1991 dispatch of MSDF minesweepers to the Gulf was supported by the Keidanren, the Japan Oil League, the Japan Shipowners' Association, the Japan Seamen's Union and the Arabia Oil Company (Courtney Purrington, 'Tokyo's Policy Response During the Gulf War', *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 65, 1992, p 172).

security framework of the UN Charter as a vehicle for Japan to move beyond a 'passive' posture of security reliance on the United States. Aimed at developing a political leadership role on the global stage, the centre-piece of the group's recommendations was Japan's participation in UN peace-keeping operations (PKO)<sup>14</sup>. Ozawa's linkage of an SDF peace-keeping role to Japan's recovery of 'normal' sovereignty and pursuit of a permanent seat on the UN Security Council has been dismissed, especially within Japan, as primarily conceived to gain foreign plaudits in order to improve his domestic political standing. Japan's involvement in international peace-keeping nonetheless emerged as a major pillar of its foreign and defence policies in the 1990s, with the enactment of the International Peace Cooperation Law on June 15, 1993, paving the way for Japanese PKO deployments, to Cambodia (1993), Zaire (1994), the Golan Heights (1996), Honduras (1998) and East Timor (2002), among other destinations. However, a special five-point charter heavily circumscribing the SDF's terms of participation in PKO, adopted as part of the 1993 PKO law to win opposition parties' support, excluded Japan from UN and other peace-enforcement operations<sup>15</sup>. Japan's hopes for the UN as a vehicle for solving regional conflicts also diminished as successive UN peace-keeping efforts faltered in Somalia, Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia from 1993 onwards.

### 1. Defence policy review.

In February 1994, Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro's administration commissioned a report on *The Modality of the Security and Defense Capability of Japan* (*nihon no anzen hoshō to bōeiryoku no arikata*), from the Advisory Group on Defence Issues, under Higuchi Hirotaro, chairman of Asahi Breweries<sup>16</sup>. The nine-member group, including former JDA Administrative Vice-Minister Nishihiro Seiki and Aoyama Gakuin University Professor Watanabe Akio, took the Gulf Crisis as their case study in considering improvements to Japan's crisis-management capabilities and the restructuring of the SDF. However, the JDA convened its own, parallel 'Conference to Examine the Future Modality of Defense Capability', from June-December 1993 and chaired by JDA Director General Aichi Kazuo, out of concern that the Advisory Group would be used to justify deep cuts to SDF force levels and in order to attempt to cushion

<sup>14</sup> 'Japan's Role in the International Community' (Draft Report), February 1992, *Japan Echo*, Summer 1992, pp 49-58.

<sup>15</sup> The five 'Basic Guidelines' adopted as part of the 1993 PKO Law set out as a precondition for Japan's participation in UN peacekeeping: 1) a cease-fire in place; 2) the consent of all parties to Japan's participation; 3) strict impartiality on the part of the peace-keeping force; 4) the ability of Japan to withdraw its contingent; and 5) restrictions on the use of weapons to the "minimum necessary" (*Defense of Japan 1995*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, p 99).

<sup>16</sup> Usui Naoaki, 'Hosokawa Accelerates Review', *Defense News*, January 10-16, 1994, p 4.



itself from the findings of the 'Higuchi Report'<sup>17</sup>. In May 1994, JDA Director General Kanda Atsushi cited North Korea as the main reason why no dramatic cuts were to be made to SDF strength as part of the official review of defence policy<sup>18</sup>.

The Higuchi Report premised its recommendations on a post-Cold War transition in international relations "from the confrontational to the cooperative pattern". During this transition, the report identified risks to global security from localised military clashes (which "will occur more frequently and become more complex" than during the Cold War), the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the destabilising spread of poverty and social discontent in weak states no longer supported by the major powers. Despite the report's relatively benign assessment of the global security environment, the fact that the Higuchi panel convened during the crisis over North Korea's withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty underlined to participants the importance of maintaining Japan's alliance with the United States and improving the structure of the SDF to adapt to the possibility of regional conflict, while simultaneously developing a multilateral security dialogue among Asia-Pacific countries. Multilateralism would evolve according to a three-stage agenda aimed initially at boosting confidence-building, before moving to an interim process of preventive diplomacy, with an ultimate objective of conflict resolution<sup>19</sup>. The attachment to multilateralism was particularly associated with Watanabe's input. From their respective inaugurations in 1994 and 1993, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) received financial and diplomatic backing from Japan as the respective official and 'track-two' vehicles for multilateral security dialogue. The JDA has also established over 13 bilateral defence dialogues with countries other than the United States since the end of the Cold War<sup>20</sup>. In accordance with a formula established under Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi's administration (1991-93), Japan's would also seek to form *ad hoc* groupings, such as the four-party Korean Peninsula talks involving Japan, the United States, South Korea and China, designed to coordinate policy on North Korea.

<sup>17</sup> *Defense of Japan 1995*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, p 143; and Mike Mochizuki, *Japan: Domestic Change and Foreign Policy*, National Defense Research Institute/RAND, Santa Monica, 1995, p 72.

<sup>18</sup> Usui Naoaki, 'Japanese Will Follow U.N. Action on Korea', *Defense News*, April 25-May 1, 1994, p 18; and 'Japan to seek Broader Regional Power', *Defense News*, May 9-15, 1994, p 4, 44.

<sup>19</sup> Advisory Group on Defense Issues, *The Modality of the Security and Defense Capability of Japan*, Japanese Government Translation, GM:3338-, August 12, 1994, pp 7-10, 17-18.

<sup>20</sup> As of June 2000, Japan had institutionalised security and/or defence consultations with the following states and organisations: NATO, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, China, Russia, South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Australia and Canada. JDA officials have also held regular defence talks with the Philippines and Vietnam, since 1999, and India since 2000. (*Defense of Japan 2000*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, pp 177-78).

## 2. Maritime threats and capabilities.

The Higuchi Report identified “interference in the safety of maritime traffic”, together with the violation of territorial air space, limited missile attack, illegal occupation of part of the country, terrorism and an influx of armed refugees among potential military dangers confronting Japan in the post-Cold War world<sup>21</sup>. Despite a declining probability of conventional military aggression against Japan, such as “full-scale attacks on sea-lanes by Soviet submarines”, the report’s authors stressed that the safety of maritime traffic was “a matter of life and death to Japan”, due to the country’s extremely high degree of overseas dependence for energy supplies and trade in manufactured goods (see Chapter One).

Following their discussion of MSDF strategy and problems on March 30, 1994, the group met for the 15th time to discuss sea lane defence, together with manning levels for the Ground Self Defense Forces (GSDF), on June 22. Its members concluded that the defence of Japan’s maritime interests would continue to be rooted in the Alliance with the United States with its “overwhelming superiority at sea”, supported locally by the MSDF and the Maritime Safety Agency (MSA) in its coast guard duties<sup>22</sup>. In terms of force structure recommendations, they concluded that the reduced threat faced by Japan justified a downsizing of the MSDF’s antisubmarine warfare (ASW) and mine counter-measures fleet. At the same time, it was recommended that greater attention be paid to establishing a “more balanced” capability with particular emphasis on improving command, control, communications and intelligence, including a recommendation to deploy reconnaissance satellites. Improving the SDF’s ability to operate jointly both with US forces and within its own ground, air and maritime components was stressed. With UN PKO participation in mind, a need was also identified to expand the MSDF’s ocean-going sealift and supply capabilities, the need for which had been revealed during the SDF deployment to Cambodia in 1993<sup>23</sup>.

The findings of the Higuchi Report and JDA study fed through to a revised version of the *taikō*, released in November 1995. As a result, the MSDF was downsized, with a decision made to cut one of two mine countermeasures flotillas, three regional destroyer divisions and three squadrons of fixed-wing patrol aircraft (Figure 15). However, under the new *taikō*, the Fleet Escort Force remains the core of the MSDF surface fleet, which is still composed of four escort flotillas, each of which is made up of eight helicopter-

<sup>21</sup> Advisory Group on Defense Issues, *The Modality of the Security and Defense Capability of Japan*, Japanese Government Translation, GM:3338-, August 12, 1994, p 18

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p 22.

<sup>23</sup> Andrew Lim, ‘Japanese Peacekeeping Operations’, *Military Review*, April 1994.



carrying escorts, including a *Kongō*-class Aegis destroyer to provide air (and, potentially, ballistic missile defence<sup>24</sup>). The MSDF eventually plans to acquire a total of eight Aegis destroyers, in an echo of the '8:8:8' force structure guideline (composed of twin battleship squadrons and eight heavy cruisers) adopted by the Imperial Navy in the 1920s (see Chapter Three). The Fleet Submarine Force operates 16 conventionally powered, domestically manufactured boats, which are organised into two flotillas. One new submarine is launched every year and the oldest automatically retired, creating a very modern fleet, equipped with Sub-*Harpoon* anti-ship missiles and Type-89 wire-guided torpedoes. The first of the 2,750-ton *Oyashio* class was commissioned in March 1998, built to a double-hulled design enabling longer range, deep-water operations and equipped with hull and flank Hughes/Oki ZQQ 5B/6 sonars<sup>25</sup>. Two submarines are held in reserve for training and one has been converted to trial an air-independent propulsion system, based on Kockums' *Stirling* engine design, which would enhance future submarines' capability for sustained, submerged operations<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> The SPY-1 radar at the heart of the Aegis system is capable of tracking and targeting up to 100 aerial targets simultaneously; the MSDF DDG, *Myōko*, tracked the North Korean *Taepodong* missile launch over Japanese territory in August 1998 from the Sea of Japan. Similarly, the March 1996 Chinese short-range ballistic missile tests in the Taiwan Strait were tracked by the US Navy DDG, USS *Bunker Hill* (*Bungei Shunju*, November 1998, pp 150-57, FBIS-EAS-98-299, FBIS Translated Text, Daily Report, October 26, 1998; and Funabashi Yoichi, *Alliance Adrift*, Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 1999, p 360).

<sup>25</sup> Kyodo, March 16, 1998, FBIS-EAS-98-075; and Usui Naoaki, 'Japan's Sub Upgrade Proceeds Despite Cuts', *Defense News*, January 23-29, 1995, p 6.

Figure 15: Force levels of the 1995 *taikō*

SDF	Basic Units	Main Equipment
GSDF	Regional Units	8 divisions
		6 Brigades
	Mobile Units	1 Armoured Division
		1 Artillery Brigade
		1 Airborne Brigade
		1 Helicopter Brigade
	Low Altitude Ground-to-Air Missile	8 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Groups
ASDF	Aircraft Control and Warning	8 Groups, 20 Squadrons
	Interceptor	9 Squadrons
	Support Fighter	3 Squadrons
	Air Reconnaissance	1 Squadron
	Air Transport	3 Squadrons
	Airborne Early Warning	1 Squadron
	Ground-to-Air Missile	6 Groups
	Main Equipment:	
	Combat Aircraft	Approx. 400
MSDF	Destroyer Units (for mobile operations)	4 Escort Flotillas
	Destroyer Units (regional district units)	7 Divisions
	Submarine Units	6 Divisions
	Minesweeping Units	1 Flotilla
	Land-based ASW/Patrol aircraft	13 Squadrons
	Main Equipment:	
	Destroyers	Approx. 50
	Submarines	16 (plus 2 in training)
	Combat Aircraft	Approx. 170
		(140 vessels and 370,400 tons)

Source: *Defense of Japan 2000*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, p 89, p 245.

The Fleet Air Force has been reduced under the new *taikō* from 16 to 13 fixed-wing and helicopter squadrons. Although a domestically produced jet design is likely to succeed

<sup>26</sup> Article by Rear Admiral Yamazaki Makoto, Director, Logistics Department, Maritime Staff Office, *Gekkan Jishi*, November 1996, pp 7-17 (FBIS-JST-97-001, January 14, 1997); and David Lague, 'We All Live for Another Submarine', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 15, 2002, p 14.



P-3C maritime patrol aircraft as they are phased out from 2010, Japan's fleet of over 80 *Orions* still constitutes the MSDF's most potent ASW asset, capable of reaching the Straits of Malacca with a range of over 2,000 nm. In addition, five EP-3 electronic surveillance versions have been acquired since 1990 as part of a drive to upgrade Japan's intelligence-gathering capabilities, which saw the establishment in January 1997 of a new Defence Intelligence Headquarters, in Ichigaya. The launch of the first two of up to four domestically produced reconnaissance satellites scheduled for late March 2003 will further add to Japan's ocean surveillance capabilities<sup>27</sup>.

### 3. Alliance factors.

Despite the disappearance of the Soviet threat rationale, which had underpinned US-Japan military cooperation on sea lane defence during the 1980s, US interest in sea lane defence cooperation with Japan periodically resurfaced in the mid-1990s, focused on potential regional maritime conflict zones in East Asia. Concern in the early part of the decade that the South China Sea was a possible flashpoint led US defence analysts to conclude that "Some nations have much more stake than the United States in free movement of ships on Southeast Asian SLOC, and these nations should be encouraged to cooperate and share the costs of SLOC protection and safe navigation"<sup>28</sup>.

Other regional security crises involving the United States have included a maritime dimension. During the 1993-94 North Korean nuclear crisis, the United States considered imposing a sanctions blockade against North Korea. In March 1996, Chinese missile tests in the waters north of Taiwan prompted a reactive deployment of two US carrier battle groups to the vicinity of the Taiwan Strait. Notwithstanding Japan's own concerns over Pyongyang's missile and incipient nuclear capabilities, the government's reluctance to participate in any US-led naval blockade in the Sea of Japan threatened a crisis of confidence within the Alliance recalling Japan's "tortured response" to the Gulf Crisis<sup>29</sup>. Growing awareness of a potential short-term threat to Japan from North Korea and long-term uncertainty over China thus spurred Japanese efforts, at the alliance level, to revise the 1978 US-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines, and domestically, to draw up new legislation to define rules of engagement for the SDF in emergency situations (*yūji hōsei*).

<sup>27</sup> Two of the satellites are optical and two will use radar imagery; both with an optimal resolution of one metre (Nishijima Toru, 'Optical, radar satellites to focus govt's view', *Daily Yomiuri Online*, March 6, 2003: [www.yomiuri.co.jp/newse/20030304wo71.htm](http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/newse/20030304wo71.htm)).

<sup>28</sup> John Noer with David Gregory, *Chokepoints: Maritime Economic Concerns in South-east Asia*, National Defense University Press/Center for Naval Analyses, 1996, Washington D.C., p 6.

<sup>29</sup> Mike Mochizuki, *Japan: Domestic Change and Foreign Policy*, National Defense Research Institute/RAND, Santa Monica, 1995, p 70; and Nigel Holloway and Sebastian Moffett, 'Cracks in the Armour', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 2, 1996, pp 14-16.

Following the Higuchi Report and new *taikō*, moves were made to 'revitalise' the Alliance, via the April 1996 Clinton-Hashimoto Joint Declaration on Security and three major initiatives. The first two of these, the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement and the Special Action Committee on Okinawa report (dealing with local problems generated by the US bases), were respectively concluded in October and December 1996. Most significantly, a process was also begun to revise the 1978 Guidelines, the new version of which was released on September 23, 1997, and approved by the Diet in May 1999.

As the Guidelines were being reviewed, US analysts and former officials laid out proposals for a geographically expanded maritime cooperation role for Japan within the Alliance. In May 1996, one month after the Clinton-Hashimoto summit, former US Assistant Secretary for International Security Policy Richard Armitage proposed that Japan should double its geographical area of responsibility for sea lane defence to 2,000 nm in the event of a regional conflict, in effect extending the area of alliance military cooperation to include the whole of the South China Sea<sup>30</sup>. US concern to enlist greater Japanese cooperation in the South China Sea was also borne out in a proposed multinational security framework for "ensuring the security of the sea lanes against piracy and other threats" laid out by Brookings Institute analyst Mike Mochizuki:

Such a framework may eventually involve Japanese destroyers escorting merchant ships during periods of international tension in conjunction with other nations. This kind of cooperation would not be directed against China because China would be a participant. But it should restrain China, as well as other countries, from disrupting maritime traffic.

According to Mochizuki, joint US-Japan naval exercises could also "be necessary to deter Chinese attempts to pressure Taiwan through shows of force"<sup>31</sup>. The text of the New Guidelines itself states only (as in the 1978 draft), that in response to an armed attack on Japan, SDF and US forces "will bilaterally conduct operations for the defence of surrounding waters and for the protection of sea lines of communications", while the SDF "will have primary responsibility for the protection of ships in surrounding waters, and for other operations". However, in a departure from the 1978 Guidelines, approximately 40 new "rear-area" joint operational tasks applying to "situations in areas

<sup>30</sup> 'Japan Urged to Defend Longer Sea Lanes in Wartime', Jiji Press Newswire, May 30, 1996.

<sup>31</sup> Mike Mochizuki, 'Toward a New Japan-U.S. Alliance', *Japan Quarterly*, July-September 1996, pp 15-16.



surrounding Japan” were deemed permissible under Japan’s interpretation of the right of individual self defence. These included maritime surveillance, intelligence-gathering activities, logistic support, mine clearance and “inspection of ships based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions”<sup>32</sup>.

#### 4. Japan’s post-Cold War sea lane threat perceptions.

The undiminished importance of the MSDF’s role in SLOC defence in the post-Cold War era is a theme echoed by many former and serving senior MSDF officers. Admiral Akimoto Kazumine, who proposed that the MSDF redefine its post-Cold War missions by expanding its multilateral constabulary activities through an Ocean Peacekeeping Concept<sup>33</sup> also sees its core military missions as essentially unchanged from those of the Cold War, namely:

- i) the defence of Japanese territory against invasion;
- ii) the security of maritime traffic; and
- iii) the protection of SLOC for the reinforcement of US military forces to Japan<sup>34</sup>.

In Akimoto’s view, what has changed since the end of the Cold War is that “the defence of sea lanes is not so much a national interest of individual states as it is ... a global interest”. In a similar vein, Admiral Kawamura Sumihiko has predicted that while SLOC security “used to be only Japan’s concern, because Japan was utterly dependent on imported oil ... SLOCs from the Persian Gulf will assume a much greater importance to almost all countries in the region” in light of growing energy demand across East Asia<sup>35</sup>. Based on a scenario of rising import demand fanning competition over limited energy resources, the importance of sea lanes “for the survival and prosperity of countries in the Asia-Pacific region in the 21st century” is likely to intensify, according to Kawamura<sup>36</sup>. Senior JDA analysts and MSDF officers have repeatedly affirmed that “the primary mission of Japan’s (MSDF) is to secure the safety of maritime traffic to a distance of

<sup>32</sup> ‘Guidelines for US-Japan Defense Cooperation’, *Defense of Japan 2000*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, pp 284-291.

<sup>33</sup> Akimoto Kazumine. ‘OPK (Ocean-Peace Keeping): Multilateral Naval Cooperation for Ocean Stabilization’, *Ocean Governance and OPK: The Thirteenth International Symposium Proceedings*, National Institute for Defense Studies, Tokyo, 1998, pp 16-23.

<sup>34</sup> Akimoto Kazumine, ‘Mission and Contribution of the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force in the Post-Cold War and EEZ Era’, paper prepared for the International Conference sponsored by the Korean Institute for Maritime Strategy, December 11, 1998, p 3.

<sup>35</sup> Kawamura Sumihiko, ‘SLOC Security – A Japanese Perspective’, in Sam Bateman and Stephen Bates (eds), *The Seas Unite: Maritime Cooperation in the Asia Pacific Region*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, No. 118, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1996, pp 165-167.

<sup>36</sup> Kawamura Sumihiko, *The Kawamura Papers*, The Kawamura Institute, Chiba, Japan, November 1998, p 101.

1,000 nautical miles”<sup>37</sup> and that “the JMSDF’s basic mission of defending the homeland and protecting the sea lines of communication will not change”<sup>38</sup>. The Higuchi Report’s description of maritime transportation as a “matter of life and death” for Japan, is a theme echoed by former MSDF Chiefs of Staff Hayashizaki Chiaki and Yoshida Manabu<sup>39</sup>.

Former MSDF Chief of Staff Vice-Admiral Yamamoto Makoto has argued that the value of SLOC for the deployment of military forces is a strategic constant for Japan, despite a general decline of interest in sea lane security since the Cold War, and that the post-Cold War expansion of trade in the Asia-Pacific has also increased the importance of SLOC to regional security. Thus, SLOC security lends itself to naval cooperation as a “joint” undertaking among major maritime trading nations<sup>40</sup>. Towards a typology of post-Cold War SLOC threats to regional sea lanes, Yamamoto identified the following six categories:

- disruption due to maritime accidents or disasters at sea;
- disruption to the maritime system;
- damage from piracy;
- unilateral declarations restricting specific waters;
- disruption due to regional conflict; and
- intentional obstruction by a sea-denial power.

Of these six categories, Yamamoto classified the latter three as “difficult to resolve without the employment of a military response”. In April 1998, JDA Administrative Vice-Minister Akiyama Masaru said, in the context of the debate over the geographical scope of the US-Japan Defence Cooperation Guidelines, that sea lanes were among the factors important to Japan’s peace and security that may be used to define emergencies in “areas surrounding Japan”, even if far from Japanese territory<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> Kondo Shigekatsu, ‘The Maritime Priorities of Japan’, in *Maritime Change: Issues for Asia*, Sam Bateman and Ross Babbage (eds), Allen and Unwin, 1993, p 147.

<sup>38</sup> K. Nakamura, ‘Strategic Influence of JMSDF’, *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, March 1994, p 82.

<sup>39</sup> Hayashizaki Chiaki, ‘Retired Admiral on Post-Cold War MSDF Strategy’, *Securitarian*, November 1996, pp 15-19. FBIS-JST-96-053, 1 November 1996; and Yoshida Manabu, ‘Resources, Maritime Transport and SLOC Security’, in Malcolm J Kennedy and Michael J. O’Connor, *Safely By Sea*, University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland, 1990, 36. See also Kawano Katsutoshi, ‘Japan’s Military Role: Alliance Recommendations for the Twenty-First Century’, *Naval War College Review*, August 1998, Vol. 51, No. 4, 1998, p 18.

<sup>40</sup> Yamamoto Makoto, ‘Sealane in the Asia-Pacific Region Today and their Vulnerabilities’, Eleventh International Conference on the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC) Studies, Tokyo, November 17-18, 1997, pp 1-6.



The generalised concern with sea lanes extends beyond the naval fraternity and JDA analysts to 'reluctant realists' in Japan's academic community. Soeya Yoshihide, for example, has highlighted the "vital" importance of sea lanes among *realpolitik* considerations influencing Japan's security perceptions, in the context of its geographical location, limited resources, and the increased complexity of the post-Cold War Asia-Pacific security environment<sup>42</sup>. In September 2002, Masuda Tatsuo, Vice President of the state-owned Japan National Oil Company and former President of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)-affiliated Asia Pacific Energy Research Centre (APEREC) cited, among the risks facing Asia's energy outlook, the risk of sea lane disruptions in the chokepoints around Southeast Asia as a result of "military developments or terrorist attacks". In April 2002, APEREC conducted a simulation exercise on scenarios for sea lane disruptions involving participants from 20 APEC member countries at Japan's behest<sup>43</sup>. For its part, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) "continues to hold dialogue with energy producing countries and countries along international shipping lanes" towards meeting the country's energy security needs<sup>44</sup>.

According to Okazaki Hisahiko<sup>45</sup>, the two most important variables defining Japan's future sea lane security are the continued forward presence of the Seventh Fleet in the Western Pacific and China's future political orientation and maritime strategy (see Chapter Eight). As the United States is the only country capable of guaranteeing sea control beyond 1,000 nm from Japan's shores, he suggests Tokyo should seek to develop a framework that would enable the SDF to provide non-combat support to the United States Navy in operations in the South China Sea, and possibly mine-sweeping operations in the Gulf -- if necessary by developing a legal framework for collective defence cooperation -- ahead of any crisis<sup>46</sup>. Okazaki also believes that Japan's freedom of navigation interests in the post-Cold War era are potentially exposed to regional conflicts. Thus, in the Middle East, a single submarine could halt Japan's oil shipments through the Straits of Hormuz, while in a "worst-case scenario" in Southeast Asia,

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in *Mainichi Shimbun*, April 14, 1998 Morning Edition, p 3, FBIS-EAS-98-104 16 April 1998.

<sup>42</sup> Soeya Yoshihide, 'Japan: Normative Constraints Versus Structural Imperatives', Chapter 5, in Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences*, Stanford University Press, California, 1998, p 199.

<sup>43</sup> 'Outlook for Asian Energy and its Global Implications', *Middle East Economic Survey*, 45:51/52 December 23/30, 2002. D9. Transcript of a paper delivered by Masuda Tatsuo at the 8th International Energy Forum, Osaka, September 21-23, 2002.

<sup>44</sup> 'Strategy and Approaches of Japan's Energy Diplomacy', The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, December 2002: [www.mofa.go.jp/policy/energy/diplomacy.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/energy/diplomacy.html).

<sup>45</sup> Okazaki's role in decision-making concerning sea lane defence in the 1980s was covered in Chapter Five.

<sup>46</sup> Okazaki Hisahiko, "In Anticipation of an Animated Discussion", January 27, 1998, [www.glocomnet.or.jp/okazaki-inst/sealane.okazaki.e.html](http://www.glocomnet.or.jp/okazaki-inst/sealane.okazaki.e.html)

Japan's oil routes through the Lombok and Malacca Straits could be blocked. Okazaki currently perceives no threat facing Japan in the Indian Ocean. However, in his view, if states or pirates disrupted Japan's oil tankers traversing the Indian Ocean in future, Japan's total reliance on the United States for naval protection would again expose it to charges of doing too little to protect its own shipping, as during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War. Okazaki also believes that Japan should consider participating in mine clearance in the Straits of Malacca, for which the SDF already has the necessary level of military capability, but lacks the enabling politico-legal framework. Okazaki's prescriptions for an expanded Japanese sea lane defence role are deliberately framed as part of his long-standing advocacy of overturning the government's 'ban' on collective self defence.

Recent defence white papers continue to emphasise the military and economic importance to Japan of SLOC, "for its survival, for sustaining its fighting capability and for securing the infrastructure for receiving support from the U.S. armed forces"<sup>47</sup>. Economically, the importance of safe-guarding Japan's maritime transportation is linked to the fact that "its prosperity is highly dependent on sea-borne traffic for importing finished goods, including machinery and equipment, natural resources, energy and foodstuffs, and for exporting manufactured goods, such as machinery and equipment and chemicals etc". It is further stressed that "an obstruction or a shutoff of maritime traffic to and from Japan would have serious consequences on its people's livelihood, economic activity and the sustenance of its defence capability. Indeed, Japan experienced a similar situation during World War II"<sup>48</sup>. Accordingly, "Japan's maritime defense capability has an important duty to protect the safety of maritime transportation". The 2000 edition of the *East Asian Strategic Review*, a quasi-official statement of JDA threat perceptions produced annually by the National Institute for Defense Studies, argued that "Ensuring unhindered use of sea lanes and the maintenance of peace and order on the high seas have become one of the major challenges for the security of East Asia"<sup>49</sup>.

In summary, the collapse of the Soviet Union did little immediately to alter the linear, incremental course of Japan's post-1954 defence policy, which had been based on a gradual military build up within budgetary, capability and operational constraints. The continuing focus of defence white papers on the potential military threat posed by Russia highlighted the rigidity of a policy outlook still frozen in the tense but predictable

<sup>47</sup> *Defense of Japan 1997*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, p 106.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* p 109.



framework of Cold War bipolarity. The review of this Cold War defence framework was not completed until 1995. Meanwhile, Japan's experimentation with UN peace-keeping and down-playing of the centrality of the US-Japan Alliance in the initial post-Soviet period, at a time when Japan's economic growth model was still regarded as robust (if no longer all-conquering), spoke of an attempt to re-orient the country's defence and security policies towards a new global and specifically Asian leadership role. However, by the time the new *taikō* was unveiled, strategic pressures in the form of uncertainty about the regional security environment, especially concerning China and North Korea, led Japanese policy-makers to adopt a more 'realist' and independent set of perceptions and responses to their security concerns<sup>50</sup>. While discounting the acquisition of fully fledged independent military power, as likely only to augment regional suspicions of resurgent militarism, Japan engaged in a modified form of balancing behaviour by moving to 'revitalise' the US-Japan Alliance while at the same time exploring multilateral regional dialogue in an attempt to diplomatically pre-empt the triggers of regional conflicts. Concerns about Japan's political, economic and military vulnerability in a less stable strategic environment were borne out in perceptions of the emergence of new threats to the security of its sea lanes. The following case study will show how Japan has perceived and reacted to the emergence of piracy and terrorism-at-sea as non-state threats, while Chapter Eight deals with potential state-level SLOC threats posed by China and North Korea.

## **II. Japan: piracy and terrorism-at-sea.**

Following on from the general profile of piracy and terrorism-at-sea in Chapter Two and the preceding overview of Japan's security and defence policy since the Cold War, this case study analyses the particular threats posed to Japan's sea lanes by piracy and maritime terrorism as sub-state level security concerns. After gauging the scale of the threat posed to Japan by these concerns and their perception in Japan, the responses of policy-makers and other actors are analysed and conclusions drawn.

Quantifying the threat to Japan posed by modern piracy is difficult in the light of uncertainty surrounding the scale and definition of the problem. Reliable data on the number of Japanese ships and cargoes affected are obscured by opaque ownership structures associated with Japan's increasing use of flags of convenience and the reluctance of many shipping operators to report incidents to the authorities. According

---

<sup>49</sup> 'Maritime Security Environment in East Asia', *East Asian Strategic Review 2000*, National Institute for Defense Studies, Tokyo, 2000, p 95.

to the Nippon Foundation (*nippon zaidan*), only around 10 per cent of incidents involving Japanese-controlled ships are actually reported. Moreover, the more inclusive definition of piracy used by the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) contrasts with the high-seas-only definition of piracy used by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

According to one estimate, over 140 'Japanese ships' fell victim to piracy attacks between 1990 and 2001<sup>51</sup>. If flag registry is taken as the defining criterion, according to the IMB's figures, of a total of 2,375 ships attacked in 1991-2001, only ten were Japanese<sup>52</sup>. If ships controlled or managed in Japan are the criteria, a total of eleven ships out of the 335 ships attacked worldwide in 2001 belonged to Japan, putting Japanese ships in equal sixth place with Norway, after Greece (50), Singapore (45), Germany (20), Cyprus (18), Hong Kong (16) and the United Kingdom (15)<sup>53</sup>. According to the *Nikkei Weekly*, 31 Japanese ships were attacked in 2000<sup>54</sup>. The Nippon Foundation is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) which, in addition to being the dispersing arm of the Malacca Straits Council for projects to fund navigational aids in the Straits of Malacca (see Chapter Six), has pursued anti-piracy initiatives on several fronts. These include the compilation of an online database launched in August 1999 from questionnaires distributed to Japanese shipping companies. The survey revealed 110 cases of piracy against Japanese-managed or controlled ships between 1994 and 2000<sup>55</sup>. Eleven of these took place in and around the Straits of Malacca, the most commercially and strategically important of Japan's extra-territorial waterways (see Appendix 3).

Actual or attempted piracy attacks in the Straits of Malacca reached a record 75 in 2000. However, only eight of these incidents involved actual attacks; seven to ships under way and one involving a ship berthed in the Indonesian side of the straits. The downward trend in attacks in the Straits of Malacca since then is attributed by the IMB to the joint patrols and law enforcement efforts of the Malaysian authorities in particular. While the

<sup>50</sup> See for example, Christopher W. Hughes, 'The North Korean Nuclear Crisis and Japanese Security', *Survival*, Vol. 38, No. 2, Summer 1996, pp 82-90.

<sup>51</sup> Mark J. Valencia 'Piracy and International Politics', in Hamzah Ahmad and Ogawa Akira (eds.), *Combating Piracy*, The Okazaki Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 2001, p 76.

<sup>52</sup> International Maritime Bureau, *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships: Annual Report 2001*, ICC International Maritime Bureau, Barking, January 2002, Table 11, p 12.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. p 14.

<sup>54</sup> 'Coast Guard adds to arsenal to fight high-seas crime', *Nikkei Weekly*, February 11, 2002, p 6.

<sup>55</sup> The Nippon Foundation database should not be regarded as scientifically based, being reliant on the cooperation and selectivity of response among individual shipping firms. While minor thefts committed in port are included more serious incidents reported elsewhere are not in the database: [db01.nippon-foundation.or.jp/cgi-bin/zaidan/search\\_e.cgi](http://db01.nippon-foundation.or.jp/cgi-bin/zaidan/search_e.cgi)



IMB's view is that piracy is likely to have peaked globally in 2000, the incidence of hijacking -- acknowledged to be the most organised and violent form of attack -- climbed from 15 to 20 in the first three quarters of 2002. In January 2003, in the latest of a string of attacks against tug boats in the Straits of Malacca, a vessel belonging to Marco Polo, a Singaporean shipping firm, was hijacked near Bintan Island and one of its crew members drowned<sup>56</sup>.

Piracy has been regarded as posing a potential threat to the security of Japan's shipping lanes since such incidents were first reported in the Phillip Channel in 1981<sup>57</sup>. Although Japanese shipping companies have voiced concerns about piracy and began developing their own countermeasures in the early 1980s, official concern in Japan dates mainly from the early 1990s, when several Japanese-owned or controlled cargo and fishing vessels were either challenged or shot at in the East China Sea, until such incidents tailed off rapidly in 1994. Recent concerns centring on Indonesian waters and the Straits of Malacca date from the September 1998 hijacking of the *Tenryu*, a Japanese-owned cargo vessel chartered to carry aluminium ingots from the Sumatran port of Kuala Tanjung. As the most violent and organised act of its kind, the attack and seizure of the *Tenryu* generated media attention in Japan, although the fact that no Japanese nationals were among the 15 crew, who were all killed, limited domestic reaction<sup>58</sup>. Several months after its disappearance, the vessel was discovered in a south Chinese port registered under a false name, and it is believed that its \$3.5 million cargo may have been sold on in Burma, via a Singaporean firm<sup>59</sup>.

On October 22, 1999, the Panamanian-flagged *Alondra Rainbow* was hijacked in similar circumstances in the Straits of Malacca while transporting its cargo of aluminium *en route* to Miike in Japan. Having gained control over the vessel and maintained course for several days, pirates eventually cast off the 17-strong crew, including the Japanese captain and chief engineer, in life-rafts<sup>60</sup>. On November 14, following the sighting by a Kuwaiti tanker in the Arabian Sea of a vessel matching the *Alondra Rainbow*'s description, units of the Indian Navy and Coast Guard launched a pursuit. The ship, which had been renamed *Mega Rama* and was flying a Belize flag, was eventually

<sup>56</sup> 'Piracy Worsening near Singapore, Shipper Says', Reuters News Service, January 15, 2003.

<sup>57</sup> Akaha Tsuneo, 'Japan's Response to Threats of Shipping Disruptions in Southeast Asia and the Middle East', *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 2, pp 255-77.

<sup>58</sup> Ishida Kakuya, 'Piracy seen increasing in Strait of Malacca', *Daily Yomiuri*, December 29, 1998, p 2.

<sup>59</sup> Kawamura Sumihiko, 'Regional Cooperation against Piracy and Armed Robbery', Hamzah and Ogawa (eds.), *Combating Piracy*, The Okazaki Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 2001, pp 142-43.

<sup>60</sup> Tanaka Norihide and Takase Hitoshi, 'Piracy and Ship's Safety: A View from the Shipping Industry' in Hamzah and Ogawa (eds.), *Combating Piracy*, The Okazaki Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 2001, pp 160-61.

recovered 300 miles southwest of Goa, on November 17<sup>61</sup>. A portion of its 7,000-ton cargo of aluminium ingots, which had already been off-loaded and transferred, was later impounded in the Philippines<sup>62</sup>. In February 2000, a Japanese-owned freighter, the *Global Mars*, was hijacked shortly after leaving Port Klang, in Malaysia, bound for India with a cargo of palm oil, the first of several vessels to fall victim to “a ruthless and determined gang ... preying on valuable palm oil cargoes being towed off the Sumatran coast”<sup>63</sup>.

While such high-profile, violent hijackings have received press attention, the reported incidence of piracy in the Straits of Malacca is, by any standard, low in comparison with the volume of traffic transiting through such a narrow and congested waterway<sup>64</sup>. The total of eleven piracy incidents involving Japanese-owned ships in the straits reported to the Nippon Foundation throughout the seven year period (1994-2000), even allowing for gross under-reporting, pales in comparison with the annual figure of 7,146 transits made by Japanese-owned vessels through the straits in 1993, while the number of attacks against ships in transit is only a small fraction of the total<sup>65</sup>. For example, of the 238 actual attacks worldwide reported to the IMB in 2001, only 64 were perpetrated against ships that were steaming at the time (42 were berthed, 130 anchored and the status of a further two undetermined). At the same time, 39 of these took place in Southeast Asian waters, where pirates operating from the east coast of Sumatra and Riau province have boarded ships that are under way, from the rear and at night<sup>66</sup>.

For Japan’s shipping companies and commodity importers, the direct costs of piracy -- aside from physical harm done to the crews -- include the damage (or loss) of vessels and the theft of cargoes and valuables. More commercially damaging are the indirect costs of charter delays, higher insurance premiums and increased on-board security outlays<sup>67</sup>. Such costs directly affect Japanese industrial sectors such as shipping and non-

<sup>61</sup> Jayant Abhyankar, *Piracy and Ship Robbery: A Growing Menace*, in Hamzah and Ogawa (eds.) *Combating Piracy*, The Okazaki Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 2001, pp 38-39.

<sup>62</sup> ‘Indian coastguards arrest hijacked freighter off Goa’, ICC Commercial Crime Services Website: [www.iccwbo.org/ccs/news\\_archives/1999/indian\\_coastguards\\_arrest\\_hijacked\\_freighter.asp](http://www.iccwbo.org/ccs/news_archives/1999/indian_coastguards_arrest_hijacked_freighter.asp), November 16, 1999.

<sup>63</sup> IMB statement quoted in ‘Piracy watchdog calls for secure sea lanes for ships’, Reuters News Service, October 24, 2002.

<sup>64</sup> ‘World Oil Transit Chokepoints’, Energy Information Administration, US Department of Energy, November 2002, p 2, 5 at: [www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/choke.html](http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/cabs/choke.html)

<sup>65</sup> John Noer with David Gregory, *Chokepoints: Maritime Economic Concerns in South-east Asia*, National Defense University Press/Center for Naval Analyses, 1996, Washington D.C., Appendix A, Table 30, p 69.

<sup>66</sup> IMB, *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships: Annual Report 2001*, ICC International Maritime Bureau, Barking, January 2002, Table 4, Status of ships during actual attacks, January to December 2001, p 8.

<sup>67</sup> Japanese insurers classify piracy as a war risk. Due to the high costs of war risk premiums, many Japanese ship operators limit their war risk policies to the Middle East, although one firm has responded to the



ferrous metals importers, but not on such a scale as to pose a systemic threat to Japan's economic well-being or ability to secure sufficient resource in-flows.

For Japan, the most serious security implications of piracy lie with its potential connection to terrorist acts at sea designed to cause mass destruction, or in the perceived 'military' category of piracy, as a means of applying strategic pressure to Japan. However, piracy may have greater practical strategic significance through the perception of some Japanese policy-makers and commentators that it offers Tokyo a pretext for exploring potential new alignments with maritime states in the Indo-Pacific region that could lead to an enhanced security role for Japan, or even form the basis of a future containment strategy directed at China. Although the concept of 'military' piracy is itself disputed, Japanese commentators have alleged in the past that Japanese ships were the target of low-level, state-sanctioned harassment in the East China Sea during the early 1990s. Such harassment is perceived to have been officially encouraged by elements within China's armed forces in order to buttress Beijing's maritime sovereignty claims, which were asserted in its 1992 Territorial Waters Law, which grants powers for the "immediate eviction of foreign military vessels or vessels owned by foreign governments and used for non-commercial purposes that violate the laws and regulations of the People's Republic of China".

Japanese ships featured prominently in a wave of incidents involving harassment and shooting that swept across the East China Sea during 1991-93. Out of a reported total of 78 boarding or shooting incidents, 32 involved Japanese-flagged vessels<sup>68</sup>. Among the largest vessels intercepted in international waters by Chinese maritime officials and forced into port, ostensibly to clamp down on smuggling activities, was a Japanese-owned Very Large Crude Carrier (VLCC) in December 1992, followed by an unsuccessful attempt to stop an 83,000 deadweight-ton Japanese-flagged liquefied natural gas (LNG) carrier. Crews on board these ships reported the use of firearms and uniformed personnel using small, naval-type craft. In March 1993, when the chairman of the IMO visited Beijing to raise questions about the attacks, the response of Chinese officials was to admit that 'rogue' officials were operating amongst its anti-smuggling units.

---

upsurge in piracy in Southeast Asia by offering a type of cover specifically for pirate attacks at a quarter of the cost of war risk insurance. ('Japanese Insurer Offers Piracy Cover', ICC Commercial Crime Services Website, July 25, 1999: [www.iccwbo.org/ccs/institutional/introduction.asp](http://www.iccwbo.org/ccs/institutional/introduction.asp)).

<sup>68</sup> The Japanese total is for the period January 1992-February 1993, from Table 8:1, in Kawamura Sumihiko, 'Maritime Transport and Communications' in Sam Bateman and Stephen Bates (eds.), *Calming the Waters: Initiatives for Asia Pacific Cooperation*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, No. 114, Australian

At the time, there was widespread speculation that the incidents could be “aimed purely at exercising China’s *de facto* authority in these waters”<sup>69</sup>. Hiramatsu Shigeo, among the best-known and ‘hawkish’ China scholars in Japan, claimed in a 1994 article that the attacks on Japanese vessels were part of a long-term state-sanctioned strategy aimed at turning the East China Sea into “China’s private sea”<sup>70</sup>. The rapid drop-off in harassment in late 1993, following protests by Japan and the IMO, and Russia’s dispatch of a naval flotilla to the area with orders to protect Russian shipping, was taken as proof by proponents of this explanation that the perpetrators of the attacks were functioning within a disciplined chain of command.

Concern about piracy permeated the JDA’s official threat assessments during the 1990s. Since 1996, the *Defense of Japan* has cited the obstruction of safe passage in the South China Sea by pirates among its concerns in Southeast Asia. Following the hijacking of the *Tenryu*, this reference to piracy was expanded to include the Straits of Malacca and Singapore in the 1999 defence white paper<sup>71</sup>. The 2000 edition of *East Asian Strategic Review* commented that “piracy attacks have threatened the safety of maritime traffic in East Asia”, and described piracy among the major challenges to “ensuring unhindered use of sea lanes and the maintenance of peace and order on the high seas”<sup>72</sup>.

# 1. Policy responses.

Japan has pursued a variety of responses at both government and private level directed at countering piracy. These can be categorised according to three general approaches:

- i) Cooperation with coastal states.
- ii) Self-help organised by shipping and import firms and Japan-based NGOs.
- iii) Coordination with international maritime organisations.

---

National University Press 1996, Canberra, p 98. The majority of Japanese ships targeted were fishing vessels.

<sup>69</sup> ‘Gunboat Diplomacy’, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 16, 1994, pp 22-26.

<sup>70</sup> Hiramatsu Shigeo, ‘China’s Naval Advance: Objectives and Capabilities’, *Japan Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 8 No. 2, (Spring 1994), pp 128-32.

<sup>71</sup> *Defense of Japan 1999*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, p 41; and *Defense of Japan 2000*, p 50.

<sup>72</sup> ‘Maritime Security Environment in East Asia’, *East Asian Strategic Review 2000*, National Institute for Defense Studies, Tokyo, 2000, p 95.



i) Cooperation with coastal states.

As noted in the preceding chapter, the importance of the region's waterways to Japan's trade has informed Tokyo's diplomacy towards states in Southeast Asia. Because the majority of piracy incidents occur within the territorial or archipelagic waters claimed by states in the region, anti-piracy cooperation has also emerged as a focus of Japan's SLOC diplomacy<sup>73</sup>. Japan has pursued both bilateral and multilateral efforts to raise awareness of the problem among regional governments and to build capacity among coastal states' coast guards through training exchanges and technical support.

At a multilateral level, growing Japanese concern over piracy has brought the issue on to the agenda of 'ASEAN+3' discussions held among Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō, former South Korean President Kim Dae-jung and Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji, prior to the ASEAN summit in November 2001<sup>74</sup>. In February 2002, the ASEAN-EU Experts' Group Meeting on Maritime Security proposed the creation of a "neutral flag patrol fleet"<sup>75</sup>, reminiscent of a proposal put forward in the 1980s by the former MSDF Chief of Staff Sakonjo Naotoshi to set up an ASEAN 'joint sea lane defence command'<sup>76</sup>. Recent ASEAN meetings have themselves served as a forum for the discussion of multilateral responses to piracy and for Japan to float new initiatives. This has applied in particular to Prime Minister Koizumi, whose willingness to focus on security issues makes him the most assertive premier since Nakasone. In his keynote speech delivered on his visit to Singapore on January 14, 2002, Koizumi stated:

I propose that Japan and ASEAN security cooperation, including transnational issues such as terrorism, be drastically intensified. Now, more than ever, we realize that one's own security is at stake when a neighbour's wall is ablaze. I believe we need an agreement for regional cooperation on piracy, and I will promote consultation to achieve that end. We must band together to eradicate the plague of piracy. In addition, I would like to strengthen cooperation between the Coast Guard of Japan and ASEAN counterparts<sup>77</sup>.

<sup>73</sup> According to the Nippon Foundation, the IMO estimates that 86 per cent of incidents occur outside of the high seas.

<sup>74</sup> International Maritime Bureau, *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships: Annual Report 2001*, ICC International Maritime Bureau, Barking, January 2002, p 22.

<sup>75</sup> Alec Almazan, 'Tougher anti-piracy solutions sought', *Shipping Times*, February 28, 2002.

<sup>76</sup> Sudo Sueo, *Southeast Asia in Japanese Security Policy*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1991, p 39.

<sup>77</sup> Speech by Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō, 'Japan and ASEAN in East Asia - A Sincere and Open Partnership', given in Singapore, January 14, 2002; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan, website: [www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmv0201/speech.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmv0201/speech.html)

With fewer legal and political constraints on its ability to deploy vessels beyond 1,000 nm, the Japan Coast Guard (JCG -- formally the Maritime Safety Agency) has been at the forefront of official efforts to build anti-piracy cooperation. According to the Maritime Traffic Safety Law and Law No. 28, passed in April 1948, the JCG has exclusive responsibility in peacetime for the safety of commercial vessels. The Guard and Rescue Department of the JCG has a trans-oceanic reach, being equipped with around 50 large, lightly armed patrol vessels, including 11 helicopter-equipped patrol ships with a standard displacement of 6,500 tons as well as over 70 smaller patrol vessels<sup>78</sup>. Its largest vessels are essentially frigates except in their very limited armament: four Oerlikon 35 millimetre (mm) anti-aircraft cannon and two JM-61 20mm 'Gatling' guns. JCG patrol vessels have accumulated substantial long-range operational experience, sending relief supplies to Bangladesh in 1991 and providing escort for plutonium shipments from Europe to Japan since 1992. In May 1998, the Coast Guard deployed two patrol vessels to Singapore on stand-by to evacuate Japanese citizens from Indonesia<sup>79</sup>.

Initiatives undertaken by the MOFA and JCG with their Chinese maritime counterparts in 1993 were credited with ending the spate of attacks on shipping in the East China Sea. Following a meeting between the Chinese and Japanese foreign ministers in February 1993, an informal bilateral summit of coast guard officials held in June led to the installation of a hot-line between both organisations. Subsequently, incidents in the East China Sea fell precipitously to just one in 1994<sup>80</sup>. Since 1993, regular contacts between JCG personnel and Chinese law enforcement officials have become institutionalised, as demonstrated in a memorandum of understanding concluded between the JCG's international division and China's Public Security Agency, outlining bilateral cooperation on drugs, illegal migration and piracy<sup>81</sup>.

The Ministry of Transport, the controlling authority of the JCG, has sponsored several regional conferences on combating piracy and armed robbery against ships, in conjunction with the MOFA, beginning with a February 2000 meeting in Singapore.

<sup>78</sup> *Jane's Fighting Ships 1996-97*, Jane's, London, 1996, p 384.

<sup>79</sup> Japan Coast Guard, *Annual Report on Maritime Safety 1998*, pp 7-8, Japanese Maritime Safety Agency.

<sup>80</sup> Stanley Weeks, *Law and Order at Sea: Pacific Cooperation in Dealing with Piracy, Drugs and Illegal Migration*, *Calming the Waters: Initiatives for Asia Pacific Cooperation*, Sam Bateman and Stephen Bates (eds), Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, No. 114, Australian National University Press 1996, Canberra, p 51.

<sup>81</sup> Interview with Shinichi Goto, CGSI-III (Commander), Deputy Director, International Affairs and Crisis Management Division, and Hideki Mochinaga, Senior Planning Officer, Policy and Legal Affairs Division, Administration Dept, Japan Coast Guard, March 6, 2002.



Follow-up conferences were convened in April 2000 (Japan), November 2000 (Malaysia), December 2000 (Japan) and March 2002 (Indonesia).

Prior to the Singapore conference, an official Japanese proposal for JCG patrol vessels to participate in multinational anti-piracy patrols of the Straits of Malacca was disclosed by local media in Japan<sup>82</sup>. This initiative stemmed from an impromptu proposal made to Prime Minister Obuchi Keizō by Indonesian President Adurrahman Wahid on the sidelines of the ASEAN leaders summit in Manila, in November 1999<sup>83</sup>. Political support was also offered, at least to begin with, by other ASEAN states, including Malaysia and Singapore. However, on the substantive issue of joint coast guard patrols in the Straits of Malacca the conference failed to reach agreement, due mainly to China's opposition<sup>84</sup>. Malaysia and Indonesia also later expressed reservations over the prospect of JCG vessels patrolling their territorial waters, at the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific Maritime Cooperation Working Group meeting in Manila, in July 2000<sup>85</sup>.

Fifteen regional countries were represented at the April 2000 Asia Anti-Piracy Challenges 2000 conference in Tokyo, including China, South Korea, India, Bangladesh and the ten ASEAN states. At its conclusion, a non-binding statement was issued agreeing to cooperate on maintaining law and order at sea, to pursue information exchange and provide technical assistance including training and equipment to assist in capacity-building among coast guard organisations with limited resources<sup>86</sup>. The JCG identifies "the strengthening of cooperative relations with concerned countries to combat the issues of piracy" and "promoting countermeasures to maritime crimes, such as the frequent occurrence of piracy in the seas surrounding Southeast Asia in particular" as part of its response to transnational crime. Cooperation activities include summits between coast guard chiefs and joint training exercises<sup>87</sup>. The JCG has also sought to engage in prompt information exchange; to stage mutual visits by patrol ships; to extend

<sup>82</sup> Nayan Chanda, 'Foot in the Water', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 9, 2000, pp 28-29.

<sup>83</sup> The meeting apparently took place one-to-one without note-takers present.

<sup>84</sup> 'China Goes it Alone at Asian Anti-Piracy Conference', Agence France Presse International (AFM); April 28, 2000, 12.00am; and Mark J Valencia, 'Piracy and International Politics in Asia', in Hamzah and Ogawa (eds.), *Combating Piracy*, The Okazaki Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 2001, p 81.

<sup>85</sup> Mark J. Valencia 'Piracy and International Politics', in Hamzah Ahmad and Ogawa Akira (eds.), *Combating Piracy*, The Okazaki Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 2001, p 81.

<sup>86</sup> Text of the statement issued at Asia Anti-Piracy Challenges 2000, April 27-29, 2000; Press Release No. 21, the Embassy of Japan in India at: [www.japan-emb.org.in/pressreleases/Press\\_ReleasesMenu.htm](http://www.japan-emb.org.in/pressreleases/Press_ReleasesMenu.htm)

<sup>87</sup> 'Japan Coast Guard', Policy Evaluation and Public Relations Office, Japan Coast Guard, 2002, p 4, 22.

technical aid and to open the JCG Academy and Training School to regional coast guard and civilian officials<sup>88</sup>.

Japanese commentators have backed the joint patrols, undertaken in the Straits of Malacca by Malaysia and Singapore since 1992, as a model that could be expanded to include the wider region<sup>89</sup>. However, piracy concerns in the straits have continued to centre on Indonesia. In its 2001 piracy report, the IMB expressed its hope that “the Indonesian authorities will increase their efforts, without which the area will always remain high risk”. Indonesia’s shortcomings owe partly to a capacity shortfall, induced by the economic crisis of 1997-98. According to Admiral Kawamura Sumihiko, Indonesia’s current maritime patrol and surveillance capability is less than half the level required to patrol its maritime claims effectively<sup>90</sup>. In February 2002, the Indonesian Navy announced that it had “deployed three warships on a permanent basis to guard the waters off Aceh to prevent arms smuggling and three others to contain pirate attacks on cargo vessels passing through the Malacca Straits”<sup>91</sup>. However, the drying up of off-budget revenues from army-owned state corporations and the run-down of the official defence budget since 1998 (currently supplying only around 25 per cent of military funding) have led segments of the military to supplement their incomes by engaging in extortion<sup>92</sup>.

Ties between the Japanese and Indian coast guards cemented during the *Alondra Rainbow* pursuit have led both countries to institute joint procedures for anti-piracy patrols<sup>93</sup>. In November 2000, JCG Director Arai Shogo flew to Chennai (Madras) to observe a joint drill designed to develop information-sharing, common communications and rescue procedures. The patrol ship *Shikishima* also sailed to Chennai, via the Straits of Malacca. According to the MOFA press release, the *Shikishima*’s visit highlighted “the expanding cooperation between Japan and India and their resolve to check the growing menace of sea piracy and to ensure safety along Asia’s busiest maritime route

<sup>88</sup> Jayant Abhyankar, ‘Piracy and Ship Robbery: A Growing Menace’, in Hamzah and Ogawa (eds.). *Combating Piracy*, The Okazaki Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 2001, p 54; and interview with Commander Shinichi Goto, Deputy Director, International Affairs and Crisis Management Division, Japan Coast Guard, March 6, 2002.

<sup>89</sup> Kawamura Sumihiko, ‘Regional Cooperation Against Piracy and Ship Robbery’, in Hamzah Ahmad and Ogawa Akira (eds.). *Combating Piracy*, The Okazaki Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 2001, pp 147-50.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p 151.

<sup>91</sup> International Chamber of Commerce, ‘ICC report sends six warships into battle against pirates’, February 12, 2002: [www.iccwbo.org/home/news\\_archives/2002/piracy.asp](http://www.iccwbo.org/home/news_archives/2002/piracy.asp)

<sup>92</sup> John McBeth, ‘The Army’s Dirty Business’, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 7, 2002, pp 20-21; and Tim Huxley, ‘Disintegrating Indonesia: Implications for Regional Security’, *Adelphi Paper* 349, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, July 2002, p 18.

<sup>93</sup> ‘Indian, Japanese Coast Guard Vessels Hold Joint Exercise, *The People’s Daily* online edition, November 9 2000: 207.121.189.139/english/200011/09/eng20001109\_54726.html



which is a crucial lifeline for commerce”<sup>94</sup>. JCG vessels currently visit the Straits of Malacca on a quarterly basis and have conducted exercises with their Malaysian counterparts since November 2000<sup>95</sup>. In November 2001, the JCG conducted an anti-hijacking drill with the Philippines Coast Guard off Manila, involving members of the JCG’s paramilitary Special Security Team, equipped with light arms for boarding and seizure operations<sup>96</sup>.

However, the direct involvement of JCG vessels and aircraft in anti-piracy patrols remains problematic under Japanese law. Under Articles 2 and 236 of Japan’s criminal code, jurisdiction covers only crimes against Japanese-flagged ships on the high seas. Japanese-owned vessels operating under flags of convenience would fall outside the law, leaving the legal basis for JCG operations to counter piracy beyond Japan’s territorial waters in doubt for the majority of vessels carrying Japanese cargoes, or in cases where the perpetrators are not Japanese nationals<sup>97</sup>. As the JCG is also proscribed from exercising with military units in other countries, joint patrols with those states that assign constabulary duties to their navy would not be possible<sup>98</sup>.

While the JCG has restricted its presence in the Straits of Malacca to port visits and drills with its counterpart organisations, expanding naval cooperation between the United States and India yielded an agreement in February 2002 on protecting commercial shipping in the Straits of Malacca. Under the agreement, India’s regional naval command in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, at the western approach to the straits, coordinates patrols and the escort of high-value ships such as oil tankers and LNG carriers with US warships, which have access to bases in Singapore at the straits’ eastern end.<sup>99</sup> India’s participation in ‘trial’ patrols of the straits began in April 2002<sup>100</sup>.

## ii) Non-governmental responses.

The Nippon Foundation, as the most active Japanese NGO on piracy issues, claims to have promoted counter-measures in three ways: first, by feeding information to the

<sup>94</sup> ‘Japanese Coast Guard Vessel to Visit India’, Press Release No. 34, Embassy of Japan in India, October 30, 2000: [www.japan-emb.org.in/pressreleases/Press\\_ReleasesMenu.htm](http://www.japan-emb.org.in/pressreleases/Press_ReleasesMenu.htm)

<sup>95</sup> Tim Huxley, ‘Disintegrating Indonesia: Implications for Regional Security’, *Adelphi Paper 349*, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, July 2002, p 83.

<sup>96</sup> ‘Coast Guard adds to arsenal to fight high-seas crime’, *Nikkei Weekly*, February 11, 2002, p 6.

<sup>97</sup> Tanaka Norihide and Takase Hitoshi, ‘Piracy and Ship’s Safety: A View from the Shipping Industry’ in Hamzah and Ogawa (eds.), *Combating Piracy*, The Okazaki Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 2001, p 173; and Kawamura, in *Ibid.* p 152.

<sup>98</sup> Interview with Commander Shinichi Goto, Deputy Director, International Affairs and Crisis Management Division, Japan Coast Guard, March 6, 2002.

<sup>99</sup> Edward Luce, ‘Indian navy agrees to protect US shipping’, *Financial Times*, February 6, 2002, p 10.

<sup>100</sup> ‘India begins patrolling Malacca Straits’, *The Hindu Online*, April 20, 2002: [www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/2002/04/20/stories/2002042002901100.htm](http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/2002/04/20/stories/2002042002901100.htm)

Japanese public and media about piracy; second, by encouraging shipping companies to pool information (including via its on-line database of piracy incidents involving Japanese-owned vessels); and thirdly by developing *toranomon*, a low-cost deck-wide tripwire alarm system designed to alert crew members to boarding attempts via grappling hooks, which it began deploying in February 2000. The Nippon Foundation has also been involved in researching a radical re-routing solution to avoid high-risk piracy areas in Asian and African waters. With Norwegian and Russian support, the Foundation co-sponsored a study into the Northern Sea Route (NSR), along Russia's Arctic coast from 1993-99. In spite of the technical and cost challenges involved in clearing an alternative route to European ports via the ice-bound Siberian coast, the NSR has been considered of potential commercial viability because it would halve the sailing distance between Japan and northern Europe via Suez. It would also bypass areas subject to pirate attacks and exposed to geopolitical risk, from Indonesia to Sri Lanka and the southern Red Sea<sup>101</sup>.

As with other navigational safety issues noted in Chapter Six, Japanese shipping firms and industries affected by piracy in Southeast Asia have pursued counter-measures independently and through maritime international organisations. Shipping industry representatives have called for the creation of a regional piracy surveillance group in Southeast Asia, composed of coast guard and police units, to patrol areas most affected by piracy. Backers of the plan also believe that a new international convention might be necessary to cover the realignment of domestic law to enable suspect vessels that attempt to shelter within the territorial waters of other states to be pursued and inspected. The burden of funding the proposed group would be divided among all stakeholders<sup>102</sup>. Since 1983, the Japan Shipowners' Association (JSA) has recommended the adoption of safety measures aboard its members' vessels aimed at reducing the risk of piracy. These include improved on-deck lighting<sup>103</sup>, increased watch duty, better shipboard communications and the installation of on-board alarm systems and remote ship monitoring systems in addition to those already offered by the Nippon Foundation and the IMB's Shiploc system<sup>104</sup>. Nippon Yusen Kaisha has developed its own Fleet

<sup>101</sup> The Yokohama-Hamburg route via Suez is 11,400 nautical miles, compared to 6,600 nm via the NSR (International Northern Sea Route Programme overview: [www.fni.no/insrop](http://www.fni.no/insrop)).

<sup>102</sup> Tanaka Norihide and Takase Hitoshi, 'Piracy and Ship's Safety: A View from the Shipping Industry' in Hamzah and Ogawa (eds.), *Combating Piracy*, The Okazaki Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 2001, pp 165-66.

<sup>103</sup> Given the trend towards smaller crews and larger vessels, some ships now regard lighting the deck directly as counter-productive, since this advertises points of vulnerability to potential attackers. Increasingly, light is directed at the water around the vessel in order to help those on deck to detect approaching vessels.

<sup>104</sup> Shiploc is a tracking system which relies on Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) technology and a concealed, battery-powered transmitter placed on board participating ships, giving shipowners the ability to



Remote Monitoring System to alert its central offices in case communications are disrupted with vessels belonging to its 450-strong fleet<sup>105</sup>. Shipowners have also been encouraged to report incidents to both coastal states and the Japanese authorities. Among the metals and shipping firms most affected by robberies and hijacking in the Straits of Malacca, Sumitomo Metal Industries, Showa Denko K.K. and Tokyo Senpaku have made private arrangements with Indonesian military personnel for on-board protection during transit through Indonesian waters<sup>106</sup>.

Since 1992, the JSA has also sought to build links with other regional shipping firms, via the Asian Ship Owners' Forum (ASF), and to lobby governments to address piracy as a policy concern. The ASF, with members from seven states, has called on coastal states to address particular 'hot-spots' such as the Straits of Malacca and the Hong Kong-Hainan-Luzon triangle. At its 1998 meeting, the ASF praised the efforts of Malaysia and the Philippines to combat piracy in the Sulu Sea and called on "all governments to increase patrols by police or naval vessels to eradicate acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships in their own territorial waters and the neighbouring area". The Forum has also called on other Asian countries to join Japan, China and India in ratifying the 1988 Rome Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation, and the Convention on Hijack Prevention under which signatories can prosecute pirates for crimes committed in another state's jurisdiction. No Southeast Asian country has yet signed the Rome Convention. Since September 11, the ASF's Safe Navigation and Environment Committee has also increased calls on Asian governments, especially Indonesia, to boost maritime patrols and to investigate reported incidents of piracy and armed robbery<sup>107</sup>.

### iii) International maritime organisations.

Shipping firms and the Japanese government have also relied on international maritime organisations to combat piracy. The IMO provides the only forum with the necessary breadth and authority to assemble together all of the major stakeholder groups affected by piracy, including coastal states, flag states and port states within the multilateral UN

---

track a vessels' movements in real time by regular 'polling' via the Internet (up to 15 times per day). It is relatively cheap, with an installation cost of 280 dollars (www.shiploc.com).

<sup>105</sup> A shipping industry interviewee expressed some skepticism about the security value of Shiploc and other polling systems that rely on course deviation to trigger an alarm at the monitoring location. Given that this provides a deterrent only to long-term seizures, more interest was expressed in anti-boarding defences, particularly the 'Secure-Ship' system based around a deck-wide, 9,000 volt electrified fence deployed by some European shipping companies. However, fire risk has limited its use to vessels carrying non-flammable cargoes.

<sup>106</sup> *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, November 18, 1999, p 11.

<sup>107</sup> International Maritime Bureau, *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships: Annual Report 2001*, ICC International Maritime Bureau, Barking, January 2002, p 23.

framework. In 1992, the IMO established a working group composed of ten member states, including Japan, Indonesia and Singapore to assess, *inter alia*, the threat of piracy. In 1993, as a result of a report handed down by the working group, the IMO's Maritime Safety Committee issued two circulars: MSC/CIRC 622, outlining recommendations for combating piracy and armed robbery against ships; and MSC/CIRC 623, detailing guidance to ship-owners, operators, masters and crew on preventing and suppressing acts of piracy and armed robbery against ships, stressing preventive measures spanning watch-keeping, safe anchorage and reporting procedures<sup>108</sup>. In parallel, the IMB set up the regional piracy centre in Kuala Lumpur in 1992, which has served to collate and publish a database of actual and attempted piracy attacks. In 2001, the IMB extended its broadcast piracy warnings, via satellite, to areas covering Japan, Asia, East Africa, West Africa and the west coast of South America. The warnings cover the details of recent piracy incidents and 'high risk' areas such as the northeast coast of Somalia and the Indonesian portion of the Straits of Malacca<sup>109</sup>.

## 2. The MSDF, piracy and maritime terrorism.

There have been calls within Japan to allow ships from the MSDF to become directly involved in anti-piracy patrols "on the high seas"<sup>110</sup>. Russia's naval show of force in the East China Sea in late 1993 demonstrated to Japan's naval fraternity the "importance of the naval presence as a method of cracking down on piracy effectively"<sup>111</sup>. An anti-piracy role for the MSDF was also proposed as part of an Ocean Peace-Keeping (OPK) concept developed by the JDA-affiliated National Institute for Defense Studies in Tokyo. The OPK concept is premised on the assumption that piracy and terrorist actions at sea are examples of post-Cold War era threats that render the "difference between military reaction and police reaction ambiguous" -- justifying an expansion of constabulary duties for the MSDF on a multilateral, region-wide basis<sup>112</sup>. The OPK was also an attempt to develop a post-Cold War role for the MSDF to rival the central role played by the GSDF in UN peacekeeping operations. However, aside from

<sup>108</sup> Jayant Abhyankar, 'Piracy and Ship Robbery: A Growing Menace', in Hamzah and Ogawa (eds.), *Combating Piracy*, The Okazaki Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 2001, p 56; and Tanaka Norihide and Takase Hitoshi in Ibid. pp 166-68.

<sup>109</sup> 'Seafarers Warned On Indonesia Pirates, Somali Armed Gangs', Dow Jones Newswires, October 23, 2002.

<sup>110</sup> Tanaka and Tarase, in Hamzah and Ogawa (eds.), *Combating Piracy*, The Okazaki Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 2001, p 173.

<sup>111</sup> Kawamura Sumihiko, 'SLOC Security – A Japanese Perspective' in Sam Bateman and Stephen Bates (eds.), *The Seas Unite: Maritime Cooperation in the Asia Pacific Region*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, No. 118, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1996, pp 166.

<sup>112</sup> Akimoto Kazumine, 'OPK (Ocean-Peace Keeping) (sic.): Multilateral Naval Cooperation for Ocean Stabilization', in *Ocean Governance and OPK: The Thirteenth International Symposium Proceedings*, National Institute for Defense Studies, Tokyo, 1998, p 17; and 'Mission and Contribution of the Japan



constitutional challenges, a prospective MSDF role in anti-piracy patrols in Southeast Asian waters would be certain to meet strong opposition from China. The existence of separate JDA and Coast Guard anti-piracy proposals can be ascribed at one level to bureaucratic rivalry, which may be partly responsible for the failure of either to materialise as envisaged. While bureaucratic competition and duplication of effort have often marred the relationship between the JCG and MSDF, thinking within the Maritime Staff Office in recent years has concentrated more on military than constabulary operations (notwithstanding the MSDF's ongoing role in transporting overseas humanitarian assistance to such remote destinations as Turkey<sup>113</sup>). At the same time, overlapping initiatives from the JCG and JDA exploring a role for Japan in anti-piracy patrols in Southeast Asia have been seen as an attempt by the Japanese government "to reassert its waning influence in the region as a counterbalance to China"<sup>114</sup>.

Although both JCG and MSDF vessels currently lack a legal mandate to engage in patrols in the Straits of Malacca outside of the rubric of 'exercises', both organisations have successfully established a *de facto* presence in the straits. While not ostensibly connected with the piracy issue, the MSDF and the Singaporean Navy have conducted exercises since 1996, while MSDF destroyers continue to send training squadrons through the Straits of Malacca on an annual basis, calling at Port Klang as they have since the late 1960s<sup>115</sup>. Since November 2001, the MSDF presence in the straits has been boosted as a major new operational requirement has arisen to maintain the MSDF flotilla on station in the Arabian Sea as part of Japan's response to the US-led war on terrorism.

#### i) Anti-terrorism and the MSDF's Arabian Sea deployment.

Japan's own exposure to terrorism aimed at mass destruction, at the hands of the Aum Shinrikyo cult which conducted the fatal March 1995 sarin gas attack on the Tokyo underground led the Japanese government to consider the use of the SDF in both an internal and external counter-terrorist capacity long before the September 11 attacks<sup>116</sup>. After the Diet passed the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law in just three weeks, in October 2001, MSDF warships were deployed the following month to the Middle East

---

Maritime Self Defense Force in the Post-Cold War and EEZ Era', paper prepared for the International Conference sponsored by the Korean Institute for Maritime Strategy, December 11, 1998, p 7.

<sup>113</sup> Interview with Captain Otsuka Umio, MSDF, Agenda Coordinator, Western Pacific Naval Symposium, Plans and Program Division, Maritime Staff Office, Japan Defense Agency, Tokyo, March 1, 2002.

<sup>114</sup> Mark J. Valencia, 'Joining Up With Japan to Patrol Asian Waters', *International Herald Tribune*, 28 April, 2000.

<sup>115</sup> 'Three Japanese Navy Vessels Call at West Port', *Bernama*, March 13, 2001.

<sup>116</sup> Christopher W. Hughes, 'Japan's Aum Shinrikyo, the Changing Nature of Terrorism, and the Post-Cold War Security Agenda', *Pacific Review*, Vol. 10, No. 1, February 1998, p 56.

“to gather information” in support of US-led operations in Afghanistan<sup>117</sup>. MSDF auxiliaries attached to the flotilla have since supplied around 40 per cent of the fuel requirements of US and UK vessels deployed in the Arabian Sea (as part of a force involving navies from around ten countries), partly to intercept suspected al-Qaida terrorists attempting to flee Afghanistan, via Pakistan. MSDF vessels, including the Aegis destroyer *Kirishima* that sailed from Yokosuka in mid-December 2002, have since transited via the Straits of Malacca *en route* to the Indian Ocean. The deployment of three destroyers and two supply ships to the Arabian Sea was Japan’s first-ever contribution of forces to an international coalition during a conflict. This was made possible without directly tackling the government’s ban on collective self-defence and constitutional constraints by linking the MSDF dispatch, via the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law, specifically to counter-terrorist efforts against al-Qaida and Taliban forces in Afghanistan, rather than defining it as a defence contingency. The new legislation, valid for two years from November 2001, may be renewed for a further two years.

Legally, the passage of MSDF vessels through the straits is thus unconnected with anti-piracy cooperation involving Southeast Asian navies, the JCG’s own activities or US and Indian naval patrols currently being mounted in the straits. However, in practical terms, the presence in the straits of outward-bound or returning MSDF vessels in close proximity and communication with naval vessels from the United States and India (with which Japan has developed a defence dialogue since 2000) will inevitably have a reinforcing effect on *de facto* naval cooperation in the Straits of Malacca and their environs.

Operation ‘Arabian Rainbow’ was scheduled originally to last for six months through to May 19, 2002. However, Koizumi said on March 24, 2002 that Japan’s military support to US-led forces fighting against terrorism will continue for the foreseeable future and extended the MSDF deployments for a further six months beyond November 19<sup>118</sup>. The long-term deployment of MSDF units to the Gulf region under a more liberal legal remit than has governed any previous overseas dispatch in the SDF’s history, carries important implications for future maritime operations beyond the ostensible one of aiding counter-terrorism operations in land-locked Afghanistan. These include the potential for the

<sup>117</sup> “Remarks by Mr Yasuo Fukuda, Chief Cabinet Secretary, Regarding the Dispatch of Destroyers and Another Vessel for Information Gathering”, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, November 8, 2001: [www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/terro0109/speech/ccs1108.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/terro0109/speech/ccs1108.html)

<sup>118</sup> ‘SDF Activities Continue in Arabian Sea’, *Nikkei Net Interactive*, February 28, 2002, at: [www.nni.nikkei.co.jp/FR/FEAT/terro/terro00259.html](http://www.nni.nikkei.co.jp/FR/FEAT/terro/terro00259.html).



original terms of the MSDF's dispatch to be merged into providing logistic support for any US military action against Iraq.

The Japanese government's original plan to commit an Aegis-equipped destroyer and the 8,900 ton *Osumi* amphibious landing ship (capable of deploying several of the MSDF's MH-53 mine-sweeping helicopters from its flat deck) as part of the MSDF flotilla was postponed owing to concerns expressed by the LDP's Kōmeitō Party coalition partner and opposition parties that the destroyer's capabilities exceeded the requirements necessary for operations to dislodge the Taliban<sup>119</sup>. However, on December 11, 2002, a Japanese offer was made to transport a 140-man Thai engineering battalion to an Indian Ocean port, for deployment in Afghanistan, paving the way for the despatch of the *Osumi* to the Indian Ocean in February 2003<sup>120</sup>.

The importance of the MSDF's *Aegis* capability to Japan's potential participation in any joint ballistic missile defence system developed with the United States adds further symbolism to the *Kirishima*'s operational deployment<sup>121</sup>. However, the decision to reinforce the MSDF flotilla in the Arabian Sea by deploying the *Kirishima* in December 2002 and the *Osumi* in February 2003, more than one year after the overthrow of the Taliban regime, had more immediate significance in view of the potential for MSDF vessels to be re-assigned to support any US attack on Iraq. In early 2002, as speculation grew about US intentions towards Iraq, Japanese cabinet officials said that under the October 2001 anti-terrorist legislation, it would be difficult for Japan to provide logistic support unless there is a proven connection with September 11. Subsequently, on the first anniversary of the September 11 attacks, Moriya Takemasa, the Director General of the JDA Defense Policy Bureau, announced at a press briefing that Japan would be able to avail logistic support to US forces if they attacked Iraq within the framework of existing legislation, provided that military action was authorised by a UN resolution<sup>122</sup>.

At the same time, the deployment was also being used to expand the range of Japan's security partners, suggesting a desire on the part of policymakers to reframe their post-September 11 security response in wider, UN-centred terms, rather than as a bilateral response made purely within the context of the US-Japan Alliance. In late February 2003, the Koizumi cabinet approved a move to allow MSDF vessels to refuel vessels

<sup>119</sup> 'Aegis Warships a No-go', *Asahi Shimbun/International Herald Tribune*, November 8, 2002.

<sup>120</sup> Sato Yoichiro, 'Japan's Naval Dispatch Plans Expand the Envelope', *Pacific Forum CSIS*, January 24, 2003.

<sup>121</sup> 'US Informs Japan Joint Missile Shield to be Deployed in '08', *Kyodo News Agency*, November 10, 2002.

from the French, German and New Zealand navies, in addition to US and UK vessels currently deployed on anti-al-Qaida patrols in the Arabian Sea<sup>123</sup>. Under the terms of the supply agreement, ships refuelled by MSDF tenders could not participate in any hostilities against Iraq<sup>124</sup>. Moreover, the decision to refuel naval vessels from those countries whose governments are least favourably disposed to US military action in the Gulf (unlike Spain and Italy, which also have ships in the Arabian Sea), suggested that Japan was continuing to hedge its options over whether to lend support to the United States, at least until international diplomacy centred around a second UN resolution on military action had been resolved.

Irrespective of whether MSDF vessels become involved in a conflict in Iraq, Operation 'Arabian Rainbow' is likely to affect the way in which SLOC security is perceived and conducted within Japan in the future. First, it establishes a precedent for expanding the legal framework under which the SDF may be dispatched without directly challenging the ban on collective self-defence. Thus, future MSDF operational deployments may be justified in reference to anti-terrorism, or by extension anti-piracy. Second, the long-term operational deployment of MSDF vessels in the Indian Ocean sets another important precedent in the context of Japan's SLOC security by establishing an MSDF presence along the length of its main energy supply routes to the Gulf, including in the Straits of Malacca. In February 2003, the *Daily Yomiuri* reported that the Koizumi administration had drawn up eight "key concerns" regarding a possible war in Iraq, including measures "to ensure the safety of Japanese vessels in the Mideast, including oil tankers", suggesting that MSDF forces in place could in future be used in an escort role<sup>125</sup>.

The decision-making process behind Japan's choice on which forces to deploy to the Middle East is significant to this thesis for one other reason. Requests from the US government in April 2002 for Japan to dispatch an Aegis destroyer and P-3C aircraft to the Indian Ocean were reportedly presaged by a meeting in Yokosuka of senior MSDF officers and the Commander of US Naval Forces, Japan, Rear Admiral Robert Chaplin<sup>126</sup>. At the meeting, MSDF officers urged Chaplin to make representations within Washington for the US government to "strongly request" such a deployment from

<sup>122</sup> Japan's Laws Permit It to Supply US Forces, Bloomberg News, September 11, 2002.

<sup>123</sup> 'MSDF to refuel ships of 8 more nations', Daily Yomiuri online, [www.yomiuri.co.jp/newse/200030214wo41.htm](http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/newse/200030214wo41.htm), February 14, 2003.

<sup>124</sup> 'Japan to refuel German, French, NZ ships in Arabian Sea', Kyodo, February 28, 2003.

<sup>125</sup> 'Govt to address Iraq war concerns', Daily Yomiuri Online, February 7, 2003, [www.yomiuri.co.jp/newse/20030207wo02.htm](http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/newse/20030207wo02.htm).



Japan. In late April, US Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz made the request for the dispatch of an Aegis destroyer and P-3C aircraft in talks with senior politicians from Japan's ruling coalition<sup>127</sup>. In this way, the close navy-to-navy relationship established after 1945 and which played an important role in sea lane defence during the 1980s still functions, at the transnational level, as a semi-independent and occasionally pivotal influence within Japanese defence policy decision-making.

### **Conclusion.**

The widespread perception of maritime piracy as a threat to the security of Japan's sea lanes, despite the very small number of incidents involving Japanese shipping interests relative to the volume of Japan's seaborne trade flows, is indicative of a broad array of post-Cold War challenges posed by non-state actors. Japan's profile as the major external user of waterways between the home islands and the Middle East that coincide with most of the piracy 'hot-spots' identified over the last decade has ensured that modern piracy is commonly viewed, within government and industry, as a particular post-Cold War concern for Japan.

Considered relative to the scale of trade flows through affected waters, piracy could be seen as more of an 'irritant' to the global maritime trading network than the systemic economic threat it is sometimes perceived to be in Japan. However, widespread and growing perceptions of piracy as a national security threat appear to be borne out both in official statements and the views of private analysts in Japan. Apart from concerns about piracy's immediate economic and commercial impact, the suspicion that Japan was the target of 'military piracy' in the East China Sea during the early 1990s, as part of a clandestine Chinese policy of asserting its sovereignty claims and testing Japan's resolve, appears genuine in realist quarters. Such a scenario echoes Cold War fears that the Soviet Union would use shipping as a low-cost means to exert political pressure on Japan (see Chapter Four).

As 'new' security challenges, the potential of anti-piracy and counter-terrorism to be used as rationales to generate post-Cold War missions and budgetary claims on the part of the JCG and MSDF can be partly attributed to bureaucratic self-preservation (especially for the JDA, after the end of the Soviet threat) and competition over a diminishing pool of central government funds. However, the level of political

---

<sup>126</sup> Axel Berkofsky, 'Japan's navy salvo catches politicians off guard', *Asia Times*, May 16, 2002: [www.atimes.com/japan-econ/DE16Dh01.html](http://www.atimes.com/japan-econ/DE16Dh01.html)

<sup>127</sup> 'US asks Japan for high-tech Afghan back-up -- media', Reuters News Service, April 30, 2002.



commitment to anti-piracy initiatives since 1998, particularly under the Koizumi administration, reflects more than mere bureaucratic rivalry. Piracy has also handed advocates of an expanded security role for Japan a politically safe pretext to explore maritime cooperation with Asia Pacific maritime countries, including India and several states in Southeast Asia. Japan's responses to the piracy issue in this context accord with a generalised perception that expanding multilateral security linkages with other Asia Pacific states has a positive influence on Japan's security environment, both by communicating reassurance to the region about Japan's benign intentions, and by serving to mitigate sources of regional conflict. A realist logic also underpinned the Higuchi Report's emphasis on multilateralism; namely, that Japan should broaden the basis of its post-1945 security posture, based on Yoshida's doctrine of reliance on the United States, partly as a hedging strategy against a future ebbing of the US security commitment to Japan, but also owing to a related concern that Japan might otherwise face an assertive China in the future without a major supporting ally. Japan's SLOC security in the context of a rising China is the subject of the next case study, in Chapter Eight.

Since September 11, 2001, the rise of international Islamic-based terrorism has presented Japan's SLOC security with fresh challenges, given the particularly high risk attached to al-Qaida-linked actions against shipping and port infrastructure in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. The dispatch of MSDF vessels to the Arabian Sea was in an immediate sense a 'political' response aimed at avoiding a crisis in alliance relations with the United States akin to those of the 1990-91 Gulf or the 1993-94 North Korean nuclear crises, notwithstanding Japan's particular receptivity to counter-terrorist cooperation. A decision to extend support for a US attack against Iraq could conceivably follow on from this logic. Viewed from another perspective, the MSDF deployment represents a commitment on the part of the Koizumi administration to expand its security role under UN auspices and to establish a naval presence along the length of its energy supply routes to the Gulf, with the aim of deterring future terrorist and military attacks on its SLOC.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### Japan's Post-Cold War SLOC Security: China and Regional Conflict

#### Introduction.

This chapter explores potential conventional military threats to Japan's sea lines of communication (SLOC) in the post-Cold War era, focussing on China in particular. As shown in Chapter Two, the outbreak of conflict in a number of regions adjacent to key shipping lanes, including the Gulf region, the South China Sea, the Taiwan Strait and the Korean Peninsula, could have a major impact on the security of shipping and disrupt international trade. A major conflict in the Gulf, while serious for Japan's security in terms of the potential for energy supply disruptions, would automatically be internationalised given the region's importance to global energy supplies. This, in turn, would mean that Japan's main problem would likely be restricted to the political one of how to organise its contribution to a US-led military coalition (as in 1991 and, potentially, in 2003). The most serious regional flash-points, from the viewpoint of Japan's SLOC, are the more proximate concerns of the South China Sea, the Taiwan Strait and the Korean Peninsula. North Korea, even with its limited capability, could potentially threaten Japan's SLOC where they are most vulnerable, using sea mines and small submarines in the approaches to Japan's ports and straits. However, the disposition of forces in the Peninsula is such that the ground and air dimensions would predominate, unlike in the South China Sea or Taiwan Strait, where the maritime dimension would shape any major military conflict primarily as a naval and air war (although China's missile build-up opposite Taiwan means that a cross-strait conflict could conceivably be limited to a missile exchange). China is seen in Japan as by far the most important state-level variable bearing on Japan's SLOC, reflecting China's status as a party to sovereignty disputes in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait. Moreover, Japanese concerns reflect China's geographically dominant position along East Asia's coastal periphery, its growing economic and political influence within the region, and its military and especially naval modernisation.

This chapter concentrates on aspects of Sino-Japanese relations that have a particular bearing on Japan's sea lane security and China's potential to emerge as a strategic threat. It does not attempt to describe the broader dynamics of bilateral ties between Japan and China, which -- unlike Japan's Cold War relations with the Soviet Union -- have evolved to a point where they are too complex to be characterised monolithically as adversarial. A shift towards a more 'realist' view of China among Japan's policy-makers, noted in

Chapter Seven, is widely acknowledged to have occurred since the end of the Cold War<sup>1</sup>. While many agree that China will be the most important long-term determinant of Japan's future security policy, opinion diverges on whether the dynamic most likely to develop will be cooperative, accommodative, benignly competitive or confrontational. Some regard it as likely that Japanese realism toward China will assert itself in the form of an accommodation with Beijing in recognition of China's 'historic' role as Asia's dominant power<sup>2</sup>. Alternatively, Tokyo's increased support for the US-Japan Alliance since the mid-1990s could be seen as evidence of Japanese policymakers' engaging in balancing behaviour against China's hegemonic potential. Equally, Japan's pursuit of multilateral security linkages with states around Asia's coastal periphery could attest to a deeper interest in exploring options for a future maritime axis to check China's power should the United States itself seek an accommodation with China.

The major objective of this chapter is to analyse perceptions among security policy-makers (in China as well as Japan) in as far as these relate specifically to sea lanes, and to draw conclusions about how these perceptions have shaped (and are likely to shape) the strategic dynamic of Sino-Japanese ties. Initially, I assess the influence that SLOC have had in the development of China's emerging maritime strategy, its operational concepts and naval doctrine. China's maritime capabilities and force development are then profiled, leading into an assessment of how China perceives the issue of Japan's SLOC security. This is followed by an analysis of perceptions held by Japanese defence decision-makers, security analysts, and former and serving military personnel regarding China's potential to imperil the security of Japan's major SLOC to Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Consideration is also given to the conventional and non-conventional threats that North Korea presents to Japan's SLOC. The chapter argues that although North Korea's maritime capabilities and threat potential (excluding its missile and incipient nuclear capabilities) are modest compared with those of China, North Korea has had an important political effect in terms of driving recent changes in Japan's defence policy.

### **I. China's naval modernisation and maritime strategy.**

In the early 1980s, under the direction of Admiral Liu Huaqing ("China's Gorshkov"), the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) moved from a doctrine of People's War, requiring modest-sized vessels operating inshore in support of People's Liberation Army

---

<sup>1</sup> Michael J. Green and Benjamin L. Self, 'Japan's Changing China Policy: From Commercial Liberalism to Reluctant Realism', *Survival*, Vol. 38, No. 2, Summer 1996, pp 35-58.



(PLA) ground forces, to a limited war doctrine extending to ambitions for a 'blue water' fleet, equipped for power-projection<sup>3</sup>. The blue-water ambitions of the PLAN have evolved in close relation to China's expanding maritime interests, which can be grouped into three core concerns:

i) Territorial claims. China's most important maritime concern is the security and sovereignty of its 18,000 kilometre (km) coastline, including the protection of coastal regions where new prosperity is concentrated, as well as the 3.6 million square km of "territorial waters" which it claims. As sovereignty over two-thirds of this area is disputed, the affirmation of Chinese maritime claims is a major function of the PLAN.

ii) Resource protection. The exploitation of marine resources in relation to seabed minerals -- especially hydrocarbons -- has grown in importance since China became a net energy importer in 1993 (importing 22 per cent of its oil in 1999; in 1980 it exported 20 per cent of production<sup>4</sup>). China also owns the world's largest fishing fleet.

iii) Trade protection. The conduct and protection of seaborne trade, which exceeds 500 million tonnes per year, has emerged as a major and rapidly growing priority. Since China's entry into the World Trade Organisation in January 2002 cemented its position as the 'factory of the world', the export of Chinese-made goods to the United States has already overtaken those of Japan<sup>5</sup>. China's exports are projected to continue expanding rapidly, fed by a surge in foreign direct investment (FDI) which exceeded 50 billion dollars in 2002, making China the most favoured destination for FDI globally. Shenzhen and Qingdao have now joined Shanghai among the world's top-20 container ports, while Hong Kong -- the leading port -- has been under Chinese sovereignty since 1997<sup>6</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> John Welfield, 'The American Japanese Alliance at the Turn of the Millennium', *Pacific Research*, May 1996, p 10.

<sup>3</sup> Liu retired in 1996 as the Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission, China's top military decision-making body (You Ji, 'The Ambition for a Blue Water Navy', Chapter 6, *The Armed Forces of China*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1999, pp 160-200.

<sup>4</sup> 'Outlook for Asian Energy and its Global Implications', *Middle East Economic Survey*, 45:51/52, December 23/30, 2002, D4. Transcript of a paper delivered by Masuda Tatsuo at the 8th International Energy Forum, Osaka, September 21-23, 2002.

<sup>5</sup> James Kynge and Dan Roberts 'Comment and Analysis: China', *Financial Times*, February 5, 2003, p 15.

<sup>6</sup> 'Review of Maritime Transport, 2002', United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2002, p 69.

1. The role of SLOC in China's maritime strategy.

PLAN strategists have proposed the establishment of maritime defence perimeters to varying depths. Admiral Liu's more limited 'green water' navy concept, apparently influenced by Japan's 1,000 nautical mile (nm) sea lane defence concept, would basically extend PLAN coverage basically to the limit of its territorial claims in the East and South China Sea (the extent of China's South China Sea claims are shown in Map 2, in Chapter One). Admiral Zhang Xusan, the former chief of the naval staff, envisaged a navy capable of operating from the Sea of Japan to the Straits of Malacca and defined China's eastern defence perimeter as including the 'first island chain', comprising the Indonesian, Philippine and Japanese archipelagos and Taiwan.

However, other Chinese defence analysts have identified strategic weaknesses in regarding the first island chain as the limit of China's defence zone, "with most of our lanes to the high seas being interdicted by the island chain, so that access to the high sea of the Chinese Navy is controlled to a certain extent by others, who are very likely to close it off in wartime"<sup>7</sup>. A more ambitious defence-in-depth concept extending to the 'second island chain', including the Bonin, Mariana, Guam and the Caroline Islands in Oceania (see Map 13, below), has also been proposed, partly on the grounds that the increasing range of modern tactical missiles requires that enemy forces be intercepted at distances beyond 1,000 nm<sup>8</sup>. The establishment of military facilities in, and defence links with Burma and port calls to South Pacific nations have been seen as evidence of growing Chinese interest in acquiring the experience and base infrastructure to support long-range operations in the Pacific and Indian oceans.

<sup>7</sup> Liu Yi-chien, 'China's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Navy Prospects', *Ta Kung Pao*, FBIS China Daily Report, FBIS-CHI-1999-1011, September 1, 1999.

<sup>8</sup> Hiram Yoichi, 'The Growing Chinese Navy and its Influence on Triple-Relation (sic) – Japan, US and Korea', paper given at Conference on Post-Unification Security Cooperation Among the United States, Korea and Japan, Hawaii, 20-23 April 1998, pp 8-9.



**Map 13:** Oceania and the ‘second island chain’



Source: University of Texas/CIA

Emphasis has been placed by some Chinese commentators on the control of key straits and chokepoints, giving rise to the belief that “the Chinese Navy is going to have to have enough might to effectively control when necessary the key sea lanes from Chinese sea-space to the high seas (including) the Korea (Tsushima) Strait and all straits or channels in the Ryūkyū Islands”. Owing to the perception that “the concerned countries keep a quite tight peacetime security, warning, and control of these straits” the same writer predicts that “the wartime struggle to control these straits will be very intense”. To the south, it is seen as strategically necessary to control the Bashi, Malacca, Sunda and Lungmu (Lombok), straits as well as “all straits in the Philippines”<sup>9</sup>.

In the view of PLAN officers, the control of Taiwan is valued for strategic reasons, apart from its political and economic value, as the “gateway” allowing unobstructed access to the Pacific. It is also prized for its sea denial value astride US military and Japanese economic SLOC; for “As such, it may be used to adversely affect the US’s forward deployment (and) Japan’s economic lifeline”<sup>10</sup>. US assessments of Taiwan’s strategic

<sup>9</sup> Liu Yi-chien, ‘China’s 21<sup>st</sup> Century Navy Prospects’, *Ta Kung Pao*, FBIS China Daily Report, FBIS-CHI-1999-1011, September 1, 1999.

<sup>10</sup> You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1999, pp 212-13.

value, drawn up by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in November 1948, concurred that control of the island by a hostile power would confer on it the “capability of dominating to his advantage and our disadvantage the sea routes between Japan and the Malay area”<sup>11</sup>. One Chinese source comments that:

The island of Taiwan holds the most crucial ‘central position’ on the Chinese coast, as well as the ‘central position’ in the first island chain. It overlooks the Western Pacific shipping lane outside of the first island chain from the Bering Strait and the Aleutian Islands .... guarding the Bashi ... and Taiwan Strait, and controlling the throat of the shipping lane from the Malacca Strait north through the South China sea, which gives it a very advantageous geographic location of great strategic value<sup>12</sup>.

The same writer describes the Paracel and Spratly Islands in the South China Sea as “crucial footholds that can effectively control (China’s) maritime space and the shipping lane from the Malacca Strait through the Philippines west to the Bashi Strait”.

Four core roles outlined by Admiral Liu have defined the PLAN’s capabilities and missions:

- i) the ability to conduct campaigns for defending or disrupting SLOC;
- ii) the ability to conduct sea battles with less than first-rate sea powers;
- iii) the ability to capture, occupy and defend islands; and
- iv) deterrence.

In spite of a shortage of battle experience and limited resources, the PLAN places priority on SLOC defence as a matter of China’s “economic survival”, in terms of trade protection and the protection of oil routes from the Gulf. China’s reliance on imports of strategic resources, such as oil and mineral ores, that are shipped through Indian Ocean sea lanes, “means that the Chinese Navy has to have enough might to cover the sea lanes through the Malacca Strait to the southern Indian Ocean, to ensure that our strategic resources are not interdicted”. Nonetheless, the PLAN itself has identified the following operational and tactical difficulties confronting the SLOC defence mission:

<sup>11</sup> John W. Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance: Nationalist China and American Cold War Strategy in Asia*, M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 1997, pp 15-16.

<sup>12</sup> Li Yaqiang, ‘What is Japan Doing Southward’, *Jianchuan Zhishi* (‘Naval and Merchant Ships’), June 6, 1997, FBIS China Daily Report FBIS-CHI-97-247, September 4, 1997.



- a necessity to operate at long distances from its home bases, as far as the Gulf, stretching its surface and submarine escort capabilities to the limit;
- a loss of initiative, due to the defensive nature of the escort mission, which allows an opponent to choose the location, method and timing of his attacks; and
- tactical vulnerability for surface escorts arising from the necessity to operate at slow speeds in convoy formation.

However, SLOC disruption is seen as integral to the navy's future operational plans, first, because long-distance lines of supply are regarded as a weakness of great power navies; and second, because a blockade of Taiwan is regarded as a serious military option in case of a cross-strait conflict. The following principles for SLOC interdiction have been put forward:

- priority should be given to selective attacks on enemy SLOC;
- to avoid damaging counter-attacks, PLAN units should be dispersed while carrying out supplementary "small-scale disruptive activities" during the campaign;
- anti-SLOC campaigns should be conducted mainly within range of land-based air cover; and
- SLOC disruption should also include attacks on enemy ports, while the number of targets should be limited<sup>13</sup>.

## 2. PLAN Force modernisation.

The PLAN expected to complete its first stage of modernisation by the end of the 1990s. During this phase, while avoiding direct confrontation with other navies as far as possible, the onus of development would fall on land-based medium-range aviation and attack submarines while the PLAN's three fleets (Northern, Eastern and Southern) would build an ocean-going task force to practice blue water operations. In the second stage, lasting until 2020 or 2030, the PLAN would move to a blue water configuration capable of three-dimensional naval conflict, equipped with nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), aircraft carriers and other major surface combatants.

In the 1990s, the PLAN moved some way towards meeting its first stage objectives, scrapping more than half of its vintage *Romeo*-class submarines and all of its first-generation destroyers, acquiring two 8,000-ton *Sovremennyy*-class destroyers and four

---

<sup>13</sup> You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1999, pp 181-82.

*Kilo*-class submarines from Russia and domestically producing *Ming* and *Song*-class submarines and the *Luhu*-class guided missile destroyer (DDG), while retrofitting existing surface combatants with surface-to-air missiles (SAM). Submarine development received priority in PLAN planning during the 1990s. Although the PLAN experienced initial problems in operating and training crews for the *Kilo* submarines, a decision to treble its Russian-bought fleet in part was aimed to compensate for the failure of the *Song* programme to develop according to schedule, following its poor performance during sea trials in 1995<sup>14</sup>. In June 2002, as part of an arms deal with Russia worth \$4 billion (which has helped to make China the world's largest arms importer), Beijing agreed to buy a further two *Sovremennyy* destroyers (equipped with the supersonic SS-N-22 'Sunburn' anti-ship missiles) and up to eight more *Kilo* submarines (all of the improved '636' design and offered at a 'below-market' price of \$200 million each) equipped with the 'Club' anti-ship missile, with a range of 225 km. China has yet to develop over-the-horizon targeting capabilities to utilise these missiles to their full range, but has put a premium on developing over-the-horizon radar and space-based surveillance and targeting systems to this end. Unsurprisingly, the PLAN has experienced teething problems in the transition to a smaller more modern and potent submarine fleet (with half as many boats as a decade ago), requiring it simultaneously to assimilate imported off-the-shelf technology while developing domestic designs<sup>15</sup>. Once the PLAN has mastered these problems however, it will "be able to form an ambush platform at the strategic chokepoints in the West Pacific such as around the Bashi Channel and the Taiwan Strait"<sup>16</sup>. Operationally, although the pattern of recent PLAN training activity has been limited, it has made progress towards developing its long-range capabilities, with the destroyer, *Qingdao*, completing China's first circumnavigation in September 2002<sup>17</sup>.

The PLAN currently numbers 290,000 personnel, fielding around 60 destroyers and frigates, around 50 conventional and six nuclear submarines, as well as an air arm with over 500 fixed-wing aircraft and 50 helicopters. Forty Su-30MKK maritime-strike variant aircraft were also included in the 2002 arms deal with Russia. Despite recent

<sup>14</sup> John Pomfret, 'China nears deal for 8 submarines', *International Herald Tribune*, June 7, 2002, p 1. *Kilo* submarines have a range of 7,500 miles when snorkelling at 7 knots. Both the *Song* and obsolete *Ming*-classes have a submerged range of 3,800 kilometres. China's Nuclear-powered *Han*-class submarines have unlimited range, but would be unsuited to the anti-shipping role.

<sup>15</sup> The *Ming*-class submarine is basically a re-modelled *Romeo*-class submarine; The *Song*-class is an original design, developed with Israeli and French assistance.

<sup>16</sup> The Bashi Channel/Luzon strait was the major killing ground of Japanese merchant ships during the Second World War (See Chapter Three)

<sup>17</sup> John Ruwitch, 'Chinese navy cruises toward modernisation', Reuters New Service, October 1, 2002; and United States Department of Defense, *Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China*, July 2002, p 26.



advances in force modernisation, the PLAN has made greater progress in its strategies and organisational restructuring towards becoming a blue water force than it has in hardware or operational terms. The US Department of Defense identifies one of China's main military weaknesses as its limited capacity for protecting air and sea lines of communication against superior naval and air forces<sup>18</sup>. Air defence for the surface fleet remains limited to point defence; moreover, the PLAN does not have any capability to defend itself against cruise missiles. The indefinite postponement of plans to acquire an aircraft carrier in conjunction with the expansion of its submarine force and land-based naval air arm appear to signal a more limited ambition to pursue sea control in coastal and offshore areas, and the pursuit of a sea-denial capability that "could form the core of a force to allow China to blockade Taiwan's ports"<sup>19</sup>. Furthermore, the acquisition of such a capability would also have both political and military value, by raising the costs to the United States of sending its Navy and Air Force to operate in and around the Taiwan Strait, and possibly the South China Sea as well. During the 1982 Falklands War, the single Type-209 submarine possessed by the Argentine Navy, the *San Luis*, distracted the British naval task by forcing it to concentrate its resources on antisubmarine warfare throughout the three-month campaign<sup>20</sup>.

### 3. China's territorial claims and SLOC.

At the diplomatic level, China has given assurances that it "attaches great importance to the safety and free passage of South China Sea international sea lanes"<sup>21</sup>. After the February 1995 stand-off between the Philippine Navy and Chinese vessels near Mischief Reef, "respect for free navigation" was affirmed at a vice-ministerial level meeting between Chinese and Philippines diplomats in early August 1, 1995. At a news conference in November 2000, Deputy Foreign Minister Wang Ri, addressing proposals for a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea with rival claimants in the ten-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), affirmed that "There is no problem with the international sea lanes ... at this stage and there won't be a problem in the future"<sup>22</sup>. China's switch to a more accommodative position over its territorial disputes in the South China Sea since the mid-1990s has been perceived as a tactical shift in

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. pp 20, 53.

<sup>19</sup> David Lague, 'We All Live for Another Submarine', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 15, 2002, p 13.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Louis Young, 'New Submarine Technology and the Asian Market in the Nineties', *Asian Defence Journal*, November 1990, p 72.

<sup>21</sup> Statement by Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen addressing ASEAN Foreign Ministers in August 1995, FBIS China Daily Report, FBIS-CHI-99-025, January 25, 1999.

<sup>22</sup> FBIS China Daily Report, FBIS-CHI-2000-1125, November 25, 2000.



response to the preoccupation of China’s strategists and political leadership with the issue of Taiwan since the crisis in cross-strait relations that erupted in 1995-96<sup>23</sup>.

Map 14: China’s military regions



Source: CIA/University of Texas.

According to the US Department of Defense report released in July 2002, Taiwan is “the major focus of China’s military modernisation”<sup>24</sup>. China’s military strategy towards Taiwan is aimed at developing a range of “credible” military options designed to maximise Beijing’s leverage in negotiations, which “may reflect an increasing willingness to consider the use of force to achieve unification”. Among its options are

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Adm. Sakonjo Naotoshi, Research Institute for Peace and Security, Tokyo, February 12, 1999.  
<sup>24</sup> United States Department of Defense, *Annual Report on the Military Power of the People’s Republic of China*, July 2002, p 50.



air and missile strikes launched from within the Nanjing Military Region, cyber-warfare and a blockade of the island<sup>25</sup>.

Taiwanese defence analysts have long perceived a merchant blockade of the island as consistent with precepts of Chinese strategy that consider political and psychological factors to be at least on a par with military factors in the use of force. According to Tsai and Chen, a commercial blockade of the island may be favoured by China's military authorities as a means of applying Sun Tsu's strategic dictum of *fu gong* ('capturing a fortified city without attack'). A blockade would provide a means of exerting pressure on the island's leadership politically, economically and psychologically, given the perception that the "symbolic" sinking of even "one or two Taiwanese merchantmen ... will drastically weaken the security of Taiwan's maritime traffic"<sup>26</sup>.

One of two options are foreseen in the event of a merchant blockade, involving either a 'close' blockade in the island's vicinity, or one executed at some distance. Since 92.5 per cent of shipping normally docks at one of three ports -- Kaohsiung (50.5 per cent), Keelung (25.7 per cent) and Taichung (16.5 per cent) -- the former option, conducted via a submarine-led blockade of the approaches to the island's major commercial ports, would simplify the problem for the PLAN of how to distinguish between trade bound for Taiwan and cargoes bound for other destinations, thus reducing the political risks of internationalising and escalating the conflict. A close blockade could also target shipping in the approaches to terminals, where concentration is unavoidable. Against this, a close blockade would entail higher military risks, given closer proximity to the island's armed forces and port defences, as well as the defenders' familiarity with the operating environment. A remote blockade would severely constrain the ability of Taiwan's navy and air force by forcing them to disperse their forces, thus reducing the military risks to China's forces<sup>27</sup>.

Although the PLAN could release assets from all three of its fleets for use in a distant blockade against Taiwan, their operational effectiveness would be reduced if operating far from their own bases. According to Tsai and Chen's scenario, if a blockade against

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p 46.

<sup>26</sup> Michael M. Tsai and York W. Chen, 'Submarines and Taiwan's Defense', *Taiwan Defense Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Spring 2001, pp 126-27, p 135.

<sup>27</sup> The Taiwanese Navy is assessed by the US Defense Department to be generally well-run and maintained, focused on counter-blockade and SLOC defence missions. However, there are doubts as to its ability to perform overlapping missions simultaneously (United States Department of Defense, *Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China*, July 2002, p 55). The most significant aspect of planned US arms transfers to Taiwan is the planned sale of eight conventional submarines -- which would do much

Taipei were undertaken, China would commit the four submarine squadrons at the disposal of its Southern and Eastern fleets. In conjunction with surface and signals intelligence operations, these forces could be deployed in inner and outer blockade lines; the former blocking traffic and raiding Taiwan's civilian and military harbours, while the outer 'ring' would target any merchant vessels attempting to break the blockade to supply the island, while concurrently deterring US attempts to dispatch seaborne supplies or to intervene directly (from Okinawa and other Pacific bases)<sup>28</sup>. According to US estimates, China has enough mine warfare assets (including bottom-laid mines, moored-influence mines, mobile mines, remote-controlled mines, and propelled-warhead mines) to lay "a good defensive and a modest offensive minefield". These mines could be laid in areas where merchant ships are likely to be concentrated, by submarines and/or Chinese commercial and fishing vessels<sup>29</sup>.

#### 4. Chinese perceptions of Japan's SLOC.

Japan's own naval modernisation programme, its alliance relationship with the United States and alleged militarist tendencies have been presented by Chinese analysts as posing a potential threat to China and its maritime security<sup>30</sup>. The overlap between both countries' maritime defence zones, including the disputed Senkaku Islands, in the East China Sea, also presents a potential source of tension<sup>31</sup>.

Chinese analysts are also aware of Japan's vulnerability to a blockade:

From the Western Pacific to Southeast Asia, the maritime shipping lane through the Straits of Malacca to the ... Persian Gulf is called Japan's economic 'lifeline', with the Straits of Malacca ... being the key link of that lifeline. The obstruction or even blockade of that shipping lane would cut off Japan's economic lifeline, paralysing the Japanese economy and society. Keeping this shipping lane open is a key

---

to improve Taiwan's ASW capability (David Lague, 'We All Live for Another Submarine, *Far Eastern Economic Review*, August 15, 2002, pp 12-14').

<sup>28</sup> Michael M. Tsai and York W. Chen, 'Submarines and Taiwan's Defense', *Taiwan Defense Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Spring 2001, pp 122-77, 136-39.

<sup>29</sup> United States Department of Defense, *Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China*, July 2002, p 23, p 51.

<sup>30</sup> You Ji, *The Armed Forces of China*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1999, pp 202-04.

<sup>31</sup> Tensions rose between Japan and China over the Senkaku Islands (called the Diaoyu in China) in 1978. China's official policy was thereafter redefined according to Deng Xiaoping's formula whereby the dispute would be reserved for a "wiser generation" of Japanese and Chinese leaders to solve. Tensions resurfaced in 1990 and 1996, linked to the activities of rightist groups in Japan seeking to assert Japan's claims to the uninhabited islands which were ceded by China under the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895.



condition for Japan's survival and development, as well as a crucial mission in the development of the Japanese SDF<sup>32</sup>.

Indeed, some Chinese analysts have argued that Japan could use the perceived vulnerability of SLOC as a pretext to justify involvement in a dispute over Taiwan, using "the right to maritime freedom" as a pretext to "ignite a conflict"<sup>33</sup>. Right-wing forces in Japan are seen by the same token as using sea-lane security concerns to revive a "southward" expansionist strategy "to seize raw material bases"<sup>34</sup>. At the same time, since 1994 China has judged the Maritime Self Defense Forces (MSDF), to be "the Asian naval armed force with the strongest ocean-going escort and offensive-defensive combat capability", able to operate independently in the South China Sea<sup>35</sup>. The *Zhongguo Tongxun She* news agency reported that in 1996 the Japan Defense Agency (JDA) published an internal report concluding that China will "bring about a pattern of military confrontation in its relations with Japan" and that China will "pose threats to Japan's maritime lifeline"<sup>36</sup>.

## **II. Japanese perceptions of China's potential naval threat.**

Since the early 1990s, concern has grown among Japan's policy-makers over the direction of China's foreign and defence policies and the implications for Japan's long-term maritime security. Official concern in Japan was awakened in February 1992, with China's promulgation of the Territorial Waters Law, legally affirming sovereignty claims based on China's continental shelf claim (see Chapter Seven). These included the Paracel and Spratly island groups disputed with Taiwan and several Southeast Asian states in the South China Sea, and waters in the East China Sea that fall within Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), demarcated by Tokyo along a median line between the two countries' coastlines. The Law "shocked" Japan by appearing to revive the territorial dispute over the Senkaku Islands<sup>37</sup>. Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi sought

<sup>32</sup> Chen Lineng, 'The Japanese Self-defense (sic) Forces Are Marching Towards the 21<sup>st</sup> Century', *Guoji Zhanwang* (World Outlook), No. 2, pp 18-20, February 8, 1996, in FBIS China Daily Report, FBIS-CHI-96-085, May 1, 1996.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Zhang Zhaozhong, 'US, Japan Role in Cross-Strait War Viewed', *Ta Kung Pao*, FBIS-CHI-1999-0819, August 18, 1999.

<sup>34</sup> Li Yaqiang, 'What is Japan Doing Southward', *Jianchuan Zhishi* [Naval and Merchant Ships] June 6, 1997, FBIS-CHI-97-247, September 4, 1997.

<sup>35</sup> Banning Garrett and Bonnie Glasser, 'Chinese Apprehensions About Revitalization of the U.S.-Japan Alliance', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 37, No. 4, April 1997, pp 390-99.

<sup>36</sup> 'China Says No to Japanese Doctrine 'Which Hides Its Head But Shows Its Tail'', *Zhongguo Tongxun She* news agency, broadcast 1235 GMT, January 18, 1997, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, Asia-Pacific, January 21, 1997.

<sup>37</sup> Soeya Yoshihide, 'The South China Sea: A Japanese Perspective', in *Security Implications of Conflict in the South China Sea: Perspectives from the Asia-Pacific*, Carolina Hernandez (ed.), Proceedings of the First International Conference on the South China Sea, Manila, November 12-14, 1995, Pacific Forum/CSIS and Institute for Strategic and Development Studies, Quezon City, 1997, p 129.

clarification of the Territorial Waters Law from Chinese Communist Party Chairman Jiang Zemin, during the latter's visit to Tokyo in April 1992<sup>38</sup>. The JDA has also expressed concerns that the Chinese Communist Party's Fourteenth Congress in October 1992 "made clear that defending the interests of the territorial waters is part of the (PLA's) mission for the future", a theme that it claims is borne out in China's National Defence Law of March 1997<sup>39</sup>.

Japanese security concerns were augmented further by the stepped-up activities of Chinese survey vessels within Japan's EEZ after 1994 and the increased presence of Chinese naval vessels and aircraft around the Senkaku islands, Okinawa and as far north as the Tsugarū Strait<sup>40</sup>. The February 1995 Mischief Reef incident was viewed with alarm in Japan as an indication of China's increased assertiveness<sup>41</sup>. At Manila's prompting, the issue was raised by Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) at a vice-ministerial level meeting in Beijing on March 2 and again by Prime Minister Maruyama Tomiichi during his visit to China in April. In August, at the second meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum, Foreign Minister Kōno Yōhei raised Japan's concerns over freedom of navigation in relation to the Spratlys dispute and stated Japan's concern for a peaceful solution<sup>42</sup>. Before the Diet in October 1995, Kōno took the unprecedented step of citing China's territorial policies and military buildup as potential sources of instability<sup>43</sup>.

Beijing's growing concern at the rise of pro-Independence political forces in Taiwan led the PLA to conduct an initial round of coastal military exercises and missile tests in the island's vicinity in July 1995, in an attempt to signal its displeasure. As the March 1996 presidential election loomed, China resorted to a second, larger round of coastal military exercises in Fujian province, opposite Taiwan, and a battery of short-range ballistic missile tests. Japanese anxieties were sharpened by the fact that some of the missiles landed in waters only 60 km from Yonaguni island, at the southern end of Okinawa prefecture<sup>44</sup>. MOFA, while avoiding outright condemnation, described the missile tests as "undesirable" from the viewpoint of regional security and said that they "may create problems for shipping in neutral waters off the place of their fall". On March 12, as the

<sup>38</sup> Wolf Mendl, *Japan's Asia Policy: Regional Security and Global Interests*, Routledge, London and New York, 1995, p 82.

<sup>39</sup> *Defense of Japan 2000*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, p 44.

<sup>40</sup> *Annual Report on Maritime Safety 1998*, Maritime Safety Agency, Japan, p 17.

<sup>41</sup> Lam Peng Er, 'Japan and the Spratlys Dispute: Aspirations and Limitations', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 36, October 1996, p 996.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* pp 1004-07.

<sup>43</sup> Michael J. Green and Benjamin L. Self, 'Japan's Changing China Policy: From Commercial Liberalism to Reluctant Realism', *Survival*, Vol. 38, No. 2, Summer 1996, p 37.



second of three phases to China's exercises began, Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryūtarō expressed his concern that many commercial flights and aircraft had been forced to divert around the areas affected<sup>45</sup>.

Although collective self-defence considerations ruled out any official Japanese military deployments in coordination with the US deployment of two aircraft carrier battle groups in the vicinity of the Taiwan Straits, Japan nevertheless dispatched Air Self Defense Forces (ASDF) E-2Cs and an MSDF EP-3 under the pretext of its own exercises to collect intelligence on Chinese activities during the crisis<sup>46</sup>. Following the crisis, JDA Vice-Minister Murata, visiting China in August 1996, reiterated Tokyo's concerns with "the exercises which took place in commercial shipping lanes"<sup>47</sup>. As the revised US-Japan Defense Cooperation Guidelines were debated in the autumn of 1997, Chief Cabinet Secretary Kajiyama Seiroku stated, controversially, that Taiwan would be included within the scope of the US-Japan Defence Cooperation Guidelines, which were then in the process of being redrafted<sup>48</sup>. Attempts specifically to delimit the scope of the Guidelines geographically were dropped in favour of a vague formula to minimise controversy, whereby the Guidelines would apply "in situations and areas surrounding Japan", while at the same time preserving ambiguity over whether Japan would assist US efforts to repel Chinese aggression across the Strait.

Japanese concerns about China had already featured in the August 1994 report drawn up by the Advisory Group on Defense Issues. In their assessment of Japan's security environment, the report's authors highlighted China, among other Asian countries, as having the political motives and economic foundation for modernising its military power in addition to the risk of conflict erupting over its disputed maritime territorial claims<sup>49</sup>. In 1995, Chairman of the Self Defense Forces (SDF) Joint Staff Council General Nishimoto Tetsuya became the most senior SDF officer to visit China, appealing for greater transparency in its defence and nuclear weapons policy. Japan's 1996 defence white paper, while characterising the pace of China's defence modernisation as "moderate", noted also that "we need to continue to watch Chinese actions, such as the

<sup>44</sup> Funabashi Yoichi, *Alliance Adrift*, Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 1999, pp 351-57.

<sup>45</sup> BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, Japan, March 6, 1996, FE/2553 E/1 and FE/2559 E/1, March 13, 1996.

<sup>46</sup> *Bungei Shunju*, November 1998, pp 150-57, FBIS-EAS-98-299, FBIS Translated Text, Daily Report, October 26, 1998.

<sup>47</sup> BBC Summary of World Broadcasts: Asia Pacific: Japan, 'Spokesman says China's Proposed Missile Launchings Near Taiwan 'undesirable', FE/2553 E/1 [1].

<sup>48</sup> Sasajima Masahiko and Iizuka Keiko, 'Chi's visit marks improving defense ties', *The Daily Yomiuri*, January 29, 1998, p 2.

<sup>49</sup> *The Modality of the Security and Defense Capability of Japan*, Japanese Government Translation, GM:3338-, August 12, 1994, pp 4-6.

modernisation of its nuclear forces, naval and air forces; expanding its scope of activities in the high seas; and the growing tension in the Taiwan Strait caused by its military exercises<sup>50</sup>.

Outside the white paper framework, one Japanese security analyst, a former Ground Self Defense Force general, expressed the more overt concerns that:

“If China conducts military drills to intimidate Taiwan, or actually launches hostile actions in the waters around Taiwan, it will seriously impact the safety of the Japanese territory and its SLOC even if the areas involved are on the high seas. Furthermore, it will arouse and inflame the latent and instinctive fear of the Japanese people creating a condition of an open crisis.”<sup>51</sup>

The *East Asia Strategic Review 2000* stated that China’s survey activities and naval presence around the Senkaku had “aroused the fears of Japan”<sup>52</sup>. The review’s authors claimed that China’s increasingly assertive presence in areas surrounding Japan was aimed at bolstering its long-term claim to marine resources, including possible oil deposits around the Senkaku. Furthermore, the timing of Chinese naval activity was interpreted by the JDA as a political signal intended to discourage the passage of Guidelines-related legislation by the Diet. *East Asia Strategic Review 2001* noted that Chinese oceanographic vessels conducted surveys within Japan’s EEZ 16 times in 1998, 30 times in 1999 and 24 times in 2000, when PLAN vessels were, in addition, spotted three times<sup>53</sup>.

The presence of warships in Japan’s EEZ is not illegal under the United Nations Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), or Japanese law. However, approaches by Chinese combat aircraft and submarines have occurred in the immediate vicinity of the Senkaku islands since the mid-1990s. On August 16, 1995, ASDF F-4 fighters based at Naha air base on Okinawa were ordered to intercept a pair of Chinese Su-27s that approached at high speed, turning short of the islands<sup>54</sup>. The following August, two Chinese submarines were reported to

<sup>50</sup> *Defense of Japan*, 1996, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, p 45.

<sup>51</sup> General Shikata Toshiyuki, Japan’s Response to the Situations in Areas Surrounding Japan: [www.glocomnet.or.jp/okazaki-inst/korea-pro-jap/shikata.kj3.eng.html](http://www.glocomnet.or.jp/okazaki-inst/korea-pro-jap/shikata.kj3.eng.html)

<sup>52</sup> *East Asian Strategic Review 2000*, National Institute for Defense Studies, Tokyo, 2000, pp 104-07.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* pp 199-203.

<sup>54</sup> Soeya Yoshihide, ‘The South China Sea: A Japanese Perspective’, in *Security Implications of Conflict in the South China Sea: Perspectives from the Asia-Pacific*, Carolina Hernandez (ed.), Proceedings of the First International Conference on the South China Sea, Manila, November 12-14, 1995, Pacific Forum/CSIS and Institute for Strategic and Development Studies, Quezon City, 1997, p 130; and Usui Naoaki, ‘Japan Spots Chinese Jets’, *Defense News*, August 28-September 3, 1995, p 10.



have passed close by<sup>55</sup>. Although reports of Chinese submarine incursions in the Japanese press were not officially acknowledged in Tokyo, in October 1996, the Defense Agency sought cabinet backing for tougher regulations to allow MSDF vessels to force unidentified submarines in Japanese territorial waters to surface. Ostensibly this was in order to respond to the threat of North Korean submersibles following a serious incursion incident in South Korean waters<sup>56</sup>. However, the Hashimoto Cabinet approved these measures, on December 24, with China also in mind. Indeed, it has been claimed that Chinese oceanographic survey vessels have been engaged in “information-gathering for future Chinese submarine operations in passages around the Ryūkyū Islands”<sup>57</sup>. In May 2000, China sent a *Yanbing*-class ice-breaker, reportedly engaged in sea-bed mapping, through the Tsushima and Tsugarū straits, prompting Japanese defence officials and diplomats to raise the issue with their counterparts during bilateral talks in Beijing, on June 19, 2000<sup>58</sup>.

Kyorin University professor Hiramatsu Shigeo's views on China's 'use' of piracy as a security threat to Japan have been outlined in Chapter Seven. Hiramatsu was among the first Japanese analysts publicly to warn of an “emerging threat of Chinese military expansion”, particularly the country's growing ability to project naval power into the surrounding seas, and he has advocated making an official commitment to include Taiwan within the scope of the US-Japan Alliance<sup>59</sup>. The former MOFA head of intelligence and Ambassador to Thailand, Okazaki Hisahiko, while uncommonly vocal among ex-MOFA and JDA officials, and regarded as ‘independently minded’ (*jissetsu*) on security issues, also represents a strain of realist, balance-of-power thinking that is privately subscribed to within conservative policymaking circles, into which he has had entry, via the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) defence expert (*zoku*), Shiina Mōto.

Hiramatsu asserted that by applying indirect pressure on Japanese shipping, or by interdicting sea lanes in the South China Sea, China could “deal a serious blow” to Japan and Taiwan without using force. Notably, the Australian author of *Safely by Sea*, a 1990 book composed of papers given at the biannual Asia-Pacific SLOC conferences since 1982, prefigured concerns similar to those of Hiramatsu and Okazaki, arguing that:

<sup>55</sup> Usui Naoaki, ‘East Asian Nations Aim to Bolster Sub Fleets’, *Defense News*, August 19-25, 1996, p 8.

<sup>56</sup> ‘Japan Mulling New Plan Against Submarine Invasion’, *Bernama-Kyodo/Asia Intelligence Wire*, October 4, 1996.

<sup>57</sup> *Sankei Shimbun*, April 17, 1999, p 3.

<sup>58</sup> ‘Japan Voices Concern at Chinese Naval Activities Around Japan’, *Kyodo Weekly*, June 23, 2000, at [http://home.kyodo.co.jp/JapanWeekly/20000623.html#WEEKLY\\_4](http://home.kyodo.co.jp/JapanWeekly/20000623.html#WEEKLY_4); and Mohan Malik, ‘Japan Wary of Assertive China’, *Jane's Intelligence Review*, December 2000, pp 22-25.

Far more likely (than a Soviet direct assault) would be the use of direct, or through surrogates, indirect pressure upon Japan's SLOCs at a distance beyond the reach of the (MSDF). The confined and relatively shallow waters of the archipelagoes (sic) bounding the South China Sea appear more attractive for such operations, particularly if they can be disguised behind existing regional conflicts or acts of piracy.<sup>60</sup>

Given this assumed vulnerability to SLOC disruption, China's perceived determination to exert control over oil resources in the South China Sea, and its preparedness to use military pressure for political leverage, Hiramatsu recommended that Japan should consider a collective security arrangement with the littoral states of Southeast Asia. Okazaki, in common with the views of Taiwanese defence analysts quoted above, regards China's approach to military power as one strand in a composite strategy that combines political and psychological factors, aimed at "the deprivation of the opponent's will to fight through psychological warfare of the threat of violence"<sup>61</sup>. According to this logic, while China will not attain sufficient conventional military power to constitute a "real threat" to Taiwan and other countries until 2020, it will probably have sufficient force to "exert credible psychological pressure" by 2010. Okazaki believes that during future periods of tension between China and Japan, China may seek to influence the Japanese government's position by applying pressure on commercial SLOC in the South China Sea<sup>62</sup>. This 'psychological' aspect of the use of military pressure on 'fragile' sea lanes, has been echoed in Japanese perceptions throughout the post-1945 era, as seen in Sekino Hideo's views profiled in Chapter Four, and it is a position still embedded in the MSDF<sup>63</sup>.

During the Cold War, Japanese defence planners regarded China as lacking the industrial base to support a submarine force capable of long-range operations, while China's unusually wide continental shelf was also recognised as rendering its submarines vulnerable in coastal waters by limiting their ability to submerge. Even late in the Cold War, despite having acquired over 50 attack submarines (mostly small,

---

<sup>59</sup> Hiramatsu Shigeo, 'China's Security Mind-set', *The Japan Times*, September 15, 1998, p 18; and 'China's Naval Advance: Objectives and Capabilities', *Japan Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Spring 1994), p 118.

<sup>60</sup> Michael J. O'Connor, Introduction, *Safely By Sea*, University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland, 1990, p 56.

<sup>61</sup> Okazaki Hisahiko, 'Can Taiwan's Freedom Be Preserved' *Daily Yomiuri*, June 1, 1998; and 'China: A Function of the Japan-US Alliance', *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spring/Summer) 1996, pp 45-50.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with Ambassador Okazaki Hisahiko, Okazaki Institute, Tokyo, March 12, 1999.



*Romeo*-class boats), MSDF officers assessed China (and North Korea) as lacking “sufficient capabilities to attack Japanese sea lanes in the foreseeable future”<sup>64</sup>. By contrast, in the post-Cold War era, China’s potential to use its submarines to blockade Taiwan and to threaten US and Japanese naval forces nearby is viewed by MSDF officers as among their most challenging operational problems<sup>65</sup>. JDA concerns centre on the deep-water trenches off Taiwan and Okinawa, where the acoustic environment severely hampers detection, a natural hazard that is complicated by the PLAN’s acquisition of the ultra-quiet *Kilo*-636 submarine. The particular difficulties of locating Soviet submarines operating in this area led the MSDF, in the late 1980s, to acquire two *Hibiki*-class acoustic intelligence vessels equipped with SURTASS towed arrays<sup>66</sup>. However, the survivability of such platforms in wartime is thought to be problematic without the allocation of screening forces, which would lead to a substantial drain on the MSDF’s limited resources<sup>67</sup>.

Izumi Hajime wrote in 1993 that Japan cannot “wait and see the expanding Chinese naval activities on the Spratly Islands located on an important transportation sea lane. This standpoint of Japan would meet with sympathies even in the international community”<sup>68</sup>. According to Okazaki, by the late 1990s, China already had the military capability to control sea lanes in the South China Sea through air power alone, based on its acquisition of Su-27s and other fourth-generation strike aircraft, which if based in Hainan and the Paracels would be able to extend air coverage throughout the South China Sea. However, against a military threat to commercial navigation in the South China Sea, Japan would retain the option of diverting its imports round the South China Sea and absorbing the higher shipping costs involved. While Okazaki believes that Japan’s oil shipments could be maintained at additional cost by diverting round

---

<sup>63</sup> See Vice Admiral Yamamoto Makoto, “Sealane in the Asia-Pacific Region Today and their Vulnerabilities”. Eleventh International Conference on the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC) Studies, Tokyo, November 17-18, 1997, p 7.

<sup>64</sup> According to a non-official 1989 MSDF assessment, “although the PRC and North Korea do possess attack submarines, we estimate that they do not have sufficient capabilities to attack Japanese sea lanes in the foreseeable future.” (Hozumi Toshihiko, ‘Naval Control of Shipping’, in Malcolm J. Kennedy, and Michael J. O’Connor, *Safely By Sea*, University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland, 1990, p 285.

<sup>65</sup> Confidential interview with JDA Operations Bureau official, March 5, 2002.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Captain Nakanishi Kenji, Research Department, Maritime Staff College, March 4, 2002.

<sup>67</sup> FY 1981 Arms Control Impact Statements, 96<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2nd Session p 342. SURTASS is a US-made system that is designed to supplement SOSUS seabed hydrophone arrays with a mobile submarine detection capability deployed aboard purpose-built, twin-hulled vessels. The MSDF’s two *Hibiki*-class vessels (commissioned in 1991 and 1992) are equipped with the UQQ-2 towed array. *Hibiki*-class vessels have a mission radius of 3,000 nm and the ability to deploy on station for 90 days. SURTASS data is relayed to shore stations via the Defense Satellite Communications System for processing and analysis and is shared with the United States. The *Hibiki* and its sister ship are reported to include five US technicians among their crew (Norman Friedman, *The Naval Institute Guide to World Naval Weapons, 1997-99*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997).

Australia, Japan's interest in the South China Sea is perceived in much broader terms than simply as a physical conduit serving its economy. For Okazaki, the potential "Finlandisation" of the littoral states in the South China Sea is the political consequence likely to flow from an assertive China, backed by its limited maritime interdiction capability in the South China Sea. For this reason, the security of the South China Sea is viewed as a security concern to Japan that would necessitate the SDF's active defence involvement in conjunction with the United States<sup>69</sup>.

Some of these assumptions have been challenged by the *Asahi Shimbun* veteran military analyst Taoka Shunji, who questions the suitability of islands and atolls in the Spratlys and Paracels (including the airstrip on Woody Island) for combat operations, much as the strategic importance and survivability of Soviet bases in Vietnam were questioned in the late 1970s and 1980s. Taoka also dismisses "amateur" fears that a South China Sea conflict would severely disrupt Japan's oil supplies, arguing that the additional cost of diverting tankers through Lombok (and east of the Philippines) would add only 0.18 yen per litre to the cost of oil in Japan<sup>70</sup>.

Regarding perceptions within the MSDF and its retinue of retired admirals, at one extreme Hirama Yoichi has compared China's "oceanic living space concept" with pre-war Germany's expansionist *lebensraum* philosophy, driven by an "insatiable desire to obtain marine resources". Meanwhile, Admiral Liu's offshore defence concept is described as the extension of a "continentalist" strategic culture to the maritime plain<sup>71</sup>. Those like Hirama who hold deep suspicions about China's long-term intentions also recognise short- to medium-term constraints on its power-projection capabilities and capability gaps in electronic support measures, electronic counter measures, air defence and antisubmarine warfare (ASW), which unless addressed will leave it essentially a coastal navy. Hirama also cites "many geographic, political and racial problems that will impede China's Navy from developing into a blue-water navy", suggesting that Mahanist and cultural-determinist explanations still have their place in contemporary Japan's strategic thought. What is most feared is that China's "strategic genius"

<sup>68</sup> Izumi Hajime, 'Improvement of the National Defense Strategy and Defence Buildup Plans for Post-Cold War Japan', '93 International Defense Academic Seminar, Korea National War College, November 2, 1993, p 59.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Ambassador Okazaki Hisahiko, Okazaki Institute, Tokyo, March 12, 1999.

<sup>70</sup> Taoka Shunji, '21 Seiki Higashi Ajia no Senryaku Kankyō', ('East Asia's Strategic Environment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'), *Sekai no Kansen*, December 1995, No. 504, pp 70-75; and 'Commentator Debunks PRC Arms Buildup', *Ronza*, September 1996, pp 66-71, in FBIS-EAS-96-162, pp 15-21.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Adm. Hirama Yoichi, MSDF (Retd), National Defense Academy, Yokosuka, March 16, 1999.



(according to which military power is recognised as occupying a sometimes subsidiary role) will be employed to exploit Japan's political and economic vulnerability<sup>72</sup>.

Mid-ranking MSDF officers have expressed concerns about China's "extremely unsettling" defence modernisation programme and assert that its military involvement in conflicts over the Spratlys and Paracels would "pose a threat to Japan's sea lines of communication"<sup>73</sup>. China has also been used, within the MSDF and more broadly, to justify the MSDF's post-Cold War role and the retention and modernisation of its capabilities. Commander Mitsuhsa Masahiko identifies China's "outright expansion of the naval strength" as "likely to become a significant threat to (the) Southwest Islands and maritime traffic of Japan". Accordingly, it is argued that the MSDF "will have to maintain a certain degree of defense capability so Japan can resolve this issue *by itself*", owing to doubts about whether the "full military support" of the United States would be forthcoming in the event of a Sino-Japanese clash<sup>74</sup>.

While the MSDF has downsized as a result of the new *taikō* and there has been no dramatic attempt to close capability gaps that exist in such areas as air defence, the steady improvement of existing capabilities and an expanding programme of exercise partners, exercise activities and overseas deployments invite the question as to where its own intentions lie. Although Japan already possesses one of the largest and most modern naval fleets in Asia, the first post-new *taikō* five-year Mid-Term Defense Program, spanning financial years 1996-2000, included scheduled naval construction amounting to 100,000 tons, including eight destroyers, five submarines, 18 other vessels and 37 SH-60J patrol helicopters<sup>75</sup>. Procurements being undertaken as part of the 2001-05 Mid-Term Defense Program (including a new 13,500-ton class of supply ship, a new and larger class of destroyer and two additional Aegis-equipped destroyers) are reportedly "aimed at dealing with Chinese submarines operating in the shallow waters of the East China Sea", as part of a general rationale linked to the defence of surrounding maritime areas and the maintenance of maritime traffic safety<sup>76</sup>.

<sup>72</sup> Adm. Hiram Yoichi, MSDF (Retd), 'The Growing Chinese Navy and its Influence on Triple-Relation (sic) – Japan, US and Korea', paper given at Conference on Post-Unification Security Cooperation Among the United States, Korea and Japan, Hawaii, April 20-23, 1998.

<sup>73</sup> Lieutenant Commander Doshita Tetsuro, 'Regional Security Links Japan and US', US Naval Institute *Proceedings*, March 1995, pp 51-54.

<sup>74</sup> Mitsuhsa Masahiko, *Defense Policy of Japan: Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, MA Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey/US Department of Commerce National Technical Information Service, March 1995, p 80 (emphasis added).

<sup>75</sup> *Defense of Japan 2000*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, p 271.

<sup>76</sup> 'Maritime Strategy to Respond to Emergency Situations', *Sankei Shimbun*, December 18, 2000, FBIS translated text, FBIS-EAS-2000-1218.

The ambiguity of the MSDF's post-Cold War strategic outlook and the continued orientation of its capabilities towards 'blue-water' formations has led some Japanese analysts to conclude that it may ultimately be aiming to establish a presence in the South China Sea<sup>77</sup>. The desire of the ASDF to have the capability to maintain AWACs coverage as far as the South China Sea has already been noted in Chapter Seven. Since 1999, ASDF E-2Cs and F-15s have deployed as far south as Guam for bilateral exercises with the United States<sup>78</sup>. The acquisition of in-flight refuelling under the 2001-05 Mid-Term Defense Program will provide the ASDF with the capability to project air superiority and support fighters to at least the northern half of the South China Sea<sup>79</sup>. The South China Sea offers a favourable operational environment for submarines (the Imperial Navy built a submarine base in the Spratly group after occupying the islands in 1939), and the former commander of the MSDF's Fleet Submarine Force, Nishimura Yoshiaki, expressed the view in 1997 that "unless the battle zone is pushed to the enemy's coastal area (at a chokepoint), our nation will suffer damages. Therefore ... we need to travel to a certain extent, and only submarines can accomplish this"<sup>80</sup>. In October 2000, the MSDF sent the submarine *Asashio* to the South China Sea, near Singapore, as part of the quadripartite Exercise Pacific Reach 2000, which also involved Singapore, South Korea and the United States -- each of which supplied a submarine to "practice rescuing submarines in distress and their crews"<sup>81</sup>. In June 2001, MSDF vessels took part in a multilateral exercise off Singapore, involving units from 16 states represented within the Western Pacific Naval Symposium<sup>82</sup>.

Concern about China is echoed among more senior and still-influential former and serving MSDF officers and defence officials. Former MSDF Chief of Staff Sakuma Makoto has highlighted China as the most important challenge facing Japan's security in the post-Cold War age. China's maritime strategy is seen as driven by a desire to "retain control of ocean resources while expanding its sphere of influence" towards the creation

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Prof. Tadokoro Masayuki, National Defense Academy, Yokosuka, March 7, 2002.

<sup>78</sup> Desmond Ball and Euan Graham, *Japan's Airborne SIGINT Capabilities*, SDSC Working Paper No.11, Australian National University, Canberra, 2000, p 9.

<sup>79</sup> A 1996 public affairs report by Master Sergeant Marvin D Krause on the US Pacific Command's website profiling 'Indonesia Air Show (IAS) '96' stated that "A B1B Lancer bomber from McConnell AFB, Kansas landed at IAS '96 after flying nonstop from Kansas to Jakarta. Part of the bomber's mission involved air exercises over the Republic of Korea, then exercises with the Japanese over the South China Sea, before refueling in the air and proceeding to Jakarta." at [www.pacom.mil/forum/airshow2.htm](http://www.pacom.mil/forum/airshow2.htm).

<sup>80</sup> Nishimura Yoshiaki, adviser to Kawasaki Heavy Industries and former commander, MSDF Fleet Submarine Force, Quoted in *Bōei Gijutsu Janaru* (Defence Technology Journal), September 1997, pp 4-19, in FBIS-EAS-97-314, Daily Report, FBIS Translated Text.

<sup>81</sup> 'Japan Joins in Multilateral Submarine Rescue Drill', Weekly Kyodo News, October 2, 2000.

<sup>82</sup> 'Singapore hosts 16-nation naval exercises', Reuters News Service, June 12, 2001.



of a “new oceanic order” in Asia<sup>83</sup>. Similarly, Admiral Kawamura Sumihiko attributes China’s “advance” into the South China Sea to Beijing’s determination to secure control over energy, mineral, and food resources<sup>84</sup>. However, China’s growing dependence on oil imports, which is forecast to rise to 77 per cent of its needs by 2020<sup>85</sup>, is also recognised by Kawamura as potentially increasing the constraints on China’s scope for foreign policy adventurism as it gains a stake in maintaining oil shipments through the South China Sea<sup>86</sup>. Nonetheless, there are fears that if the PLAN maintains its current pace of naval modernisation, China will “become fully capable of challenging its rival navies in the Pacific and the Indian Ocean in the future”.

A former MSDF Chief of Staff, Hayashizaki Chiaki, outlining his post-Cold War strategy for MSDF has compared China’s offshore defence plans, including with regard to parts of the Sea of Japan, East China Sea, and South China Sea, with the expansion of the Soviet Far Eastern Fleet during the 1970s and 1980s. Another former MSDF Chief of Staff, Admiral Sakonjo Naotoshi, while not dismissing China’s long-term threat potential, estimates that China’s naval capabilities lag behind those of Japan by about 20 years. Even assuming a steady increase in China’s defence budget, the SDF is likely to retain a technological edge over the PLAN until around 2020. China’s acquisition of an aircraft carrier would not necessarily change this, as it would both absorb significant defensive assets and constitute a “big target” for any opposing force.

Among serving staff officers, the view is shared that China still lacks a power-projection capability, but there is particular concern over its missile capabilities and willingness to use these in connection with political goals, as demonstrated vis-à-vis Taiwan in 1995 and 1996. Any use of force in the Strait would be viewed as automatically threatening Japan’s SLOC. Viewed simply as a narrow security concern over the safety of shipping, tankers and container vessels in transit through the East China Sea would have the option to divert safely east of the Taiwan Strait. However, there is also a pragmatic understanding among politically aware MSDF officers that the most important determinant of Japan’s reaction to a cross-strait crisis would be a decision by the United States to intervene. It is felt that this would trigger irresistible pressures within the

<sup>83</sup> Adm. Sakuma Makoto ‘Former MSDF Staff Chief on Security Issues’, *Securitarian*, July 10, 1996, pp 23-28, in FBIS-EAS-96-156, August 12, 1996, pp 4-9.

<sup>84</sup> Kawamura Sumihiko, ‘Former Admiral on South China Sea Balance’, *Sekai no Kansen*, August 1996, pp 70-77 In FBIS-EAS-96-155, August 9, 1996.

<sup>85</sup> ‘Energy Security and Sealane Disruption’, *Australian Energy News*, Issue 24, June 2002, p1; at [www.industry.gov.au/resources/netenergy/aen/aen24/6enrgy.html](http://www.industry.gov.au/resources/netenergy/aen/aen24/6enrgy.html)

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Adm. Kawamura Sumihiko, Okazaki Institute, March 1, 2002.

Alliance for Japan to provide defence cooperation under the terms of the new Guidelines<sup>87</sup>.

Long-term concern about China extends to the top of the civilian hierarchy within the JDA. Former Administrative Vice-Minister Akiyama Masahiro has identified China's future defence capability as Japan's single most important maritime security challenge. In his view, Japan should match any decision by the PLAN to acquire an aircraft carrier. Under Akiyama's tenure at the JDA, the annual defence white paper assessments of China's military power expanded from three pages in 1995 to nine pages in the 2001 edition. He believes that Japan may have to expand its sea lane defence commitment beyond 1,000 nm in future<sup>88</sup>.

At a wider level in policy-making and more generally in society, attitudes towards China are marked by ambivalence in Japan. An alleged sympathetic bias towards Beijing is sometimes thought to exist within the 'China School' of MOFA's Asian Affairs Bureau, the mass media (especially *Asahi Shimbun*) and sections of the LDP and big business (which seeks to maintain access to China's commercial opportunities)<sup>89</sup>. The end of the LDP's monopoly on power in 1993, the rise of a new political generation and the demise of ideology as an important factor in Japan-China relations have combined to make debate on China more open and to weaken political taboos against criticising the country. The retreat from politics of LDP politicians regarded as broadly sympathetic to China, in particular former party Secretary General Kato Koichi, has helped to shift the balance of political opinion towards more nationalist voices within the controlling party. In 1995-96, LDP deputies called (unsuccessfully) for a freeze in yen loans to China in protest at Beijing's nuclear testing programme<sup>90</sup>. More recently, Japan's overseas development aid to China has come under pressure for cuts in response to China's continued high military spending. A perceived increase in the tendency of Chinese officials to use "history problems" (*rekishi mondai*) from the pre-1945 period as moral leverage to block undesirable aspects of Japan's foreign and defence policies is also resented<sup>91</sup>. Outside the LDP, the same trend is exemplified by the political resurgence of the mayor of Tokyo (and advocate of naval expansion), Ishihara Shintaro, whose strident

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Captain Otsuka Umio, MSDF, Agenda Coordinator, Western Pacific Naval Symposium, Plans and Program Division, Maritime Staff Office, Japan Defense Agency, Tokyo, March 1, 2002.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with former JDA Administrative Vice-Minister Akiyama Masahiro, Ship and Ocean Foundation, Nippon Foundation, Tokyo, March 4, 2002.

<sup>89</sup> Historically, the Liberal Democratic Party was divided over China policy along a faultline between the pro-Taipei *Ajia mondai kenkyūkai* ('A-ken': the 'Asia problems research group') and the pro-Beijing *ajia-afurika mondai kenkyūkai* (A-A ken: the 'Asia-Africa problems research group').

<sup>90</sup> Robert S. Ross, *Managing A Changing Relationship: China's Japan Policy in the 1990s*, U.S. Army War College, September 1996, p 1.



criticism of the Chinese government and ethnic Chinese criminal activities in Japan contrasts with his appeals to Pan-Asianism in the 1980s. Within the LDP, politicians concerned at the escalating trend in relocation of Japanese firms to China (see Chapter One) have branded China as an economic threat to Japan as well as a latent strategic challenger. A growing 'realist' perception that China poses a potential security threat to Japan has also been borne out among non-left-wing opposition parties. For example, the opposition *shinshintō* party, in 1995, included the Spratlys among sources of regional insecurity in its party policy outline and in 1996 issued a communiqué calling on China to halt its missile tests near Taiwan<sup>92</sup>.

While Soeya Yoshihide has described the "China threat" thesis as "alien" to the Japanese government and people, and also to the country's post-1989 policy of supporting China's economic modernisation, there has been an "unmistakable" shift in Japanese official and popular attitudes towards China since the mid-1990s<sup>93</sup>. Mainstream Japanese international scholars, including Eto Shinkichi, Iriye Akira and Inoguchi Takashi followed a liberal-institutionalist approach towards relations with China up to the early 1990s. This was based on the assumption that "Under present circumstances ... there is no possibility of China's emerging as an expansionist, hegemonic power wielding military force against its neighbours to augment its own territory"<sup>94</sup>. However, the perceptions of China held by a younger generation of Japanese academics, of whom Soeya is representative, have undergone a transformation in the post-Cold War period. In 1993, Soeya wrote that "With its status as an economic superpower and its strictly defence-oriented security policy Japan is in a good position to demand that China act with restraint in the South China Sea"<sup>95</sup>. At the time, such views were echoed by other Japanese observers who thought that the threat of Japanese economic sanctions "acts as an important check on Chinese ambitions" and believed that Japan's status as a non-claimant in the South China Sea qualified it to broker a solution to the territorial disputes over the Spratlys and Paracels<sup>96</sup>. However, after the Mischief Reef episode, the Taiwan missile crisis and China's nuclear tests in August 1995 and July 1996, Soeya urged the need to be "vigilant" against Chinese moves in the South China Sea as "one of the few cases where Japan's national and security interests are evidently at stake in the post-Cold

<sup>91</sup> Susan V Lawrence, 'Prickly Pair', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, July 22, 1999, p 20.

<sup>92</sup> *Sankei Shimbun*, November 28, 1995.

<sup>93</sup> Soeya Yoshihide, 'Japan: Normative Constraints Versus Structural Imperatives', in Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences*, Stanford University Press, California, 1998, pp 203-07.

<sup>94</sup> Eto Shinkichi, 'China and Sino-Japanese Relations in the Coming Decades', *Japan Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Winter) 1996, p 24.

<sup>95</sup> Soeya Yoshihide, 'Islands of Contention', *Look Japan*, May 1995, p 23.

<sup>96</sup> Sato Koichi, 'The Japan Card', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 13, 1995, p 32.

War era”<sup>97</sup>. Since Japan “is in no position to deal with China by itself”, he concluded that it faced a “highly strategic” need to adopt closer defence relations with the United States as the only “viable counterpart to the Chinese military”.

### III. North Korea’s SLOC threat.

While Japan’s maritime military threat perceptions are focused on China in the medium to long term, a less predictable, more proximate and confirmed set of military threats and broader security challenges is presently posed by North Korea. In terms of a conventional threat to Japan’s SLOC, North Korea’s possession of around 20 submersibles is evaluated by the former head of the MSDF’s Fleet Submarine Force as “quite ominous”<sup>98</sup>. The use of sea mines is also viewed with some concern by Japan’s defence planners, although the maritime component is not generally viewed as central to any resumed fighting on the Peninsula.

However, non-conventional maritime threats posed by North Korea have gained attention since 1999. In March of that year, the unsuccessful pursuit by MSDF surface vessels of two high-speed “suspicious vessels” (*fushinsen*) in the Sea of Japan, off the Nōto Peninsula, demonstrated the vulnerability of Japan’s territorial seas and EEZ to North Korean covert maritime intrusions. Previous North Korean intrusions along Japan’s Sea of Japan coastline in the 1970s and the early 1980s are thought to have involved illicit intelligence collection, the infiltration of covert operatives, drugs smuggling, and -- as was admitted by North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in his Pyongyang summit with Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō in September 2002 -- the abduction of several Japanese citizens<sup>99</sup>. In December 2001, the pursuit of another North Korean “spy ship” by Japan Coast Guard (JCG) vessels culminated in a firefight southwest of Kagoshima and the vessel’s sinking, endorsed as a “resolute action” by US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage<sup>100</sup>.

The threat posed by North Korea to Japan’s maritime security has provided impetus for legislative moves to relax restrictions on the use of force by the JCG and MSDF. Both institutions have also argued the necessity of new capabilities to cope with North

<sup>97</sup> Soeya Yoshihide, ‘The South China Sea: A Japanese Perspective’, in *Security Implications of Conflict in the South China Sea: Perspectives from the Asia-Pacific*, Carolina Hernandez (ed.), Proceedings of the First International Conference on the South China Sea, Manila, November 12-14, 1995, Pacific Forum/CSIS and Institute for Strategic and Development Studies, Quezon City, 1997, pp 130-31.

<sup>98</sup> Nishimura Yoshiaki, adviser to Kawasaki Heavy Industries and former commander, MSDF Fleet Submarine Force, Quoted in *Bōei Gijutsu Janaru* (Defence Technology Journal), September 1997, pp 4-19, in FBIS-EAS-97-314, Daily Report, FBIS Translated Text.

<sup>99</sup> Misawa Akihiko, ‘Japan Perspective: Grim Reality Returns to E. Asia’, *Daily Yomiuri Online*, May 5, 2002: [www.yomiuri.co.jp/newse/20020705wo41.htm](http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/newse/20020705wo41.htm).



Korea's maritime intrusions, such as the MSDF's guided missile patrol boats ordered after the 1999 sea chase (each capable of making 44 knots and armed with anti-ship missiles and 12.7 millimetre machine guns)<sup>101</sup>. Official reactions to North Korea's maritime intrusions also exposed continuing deficiencies in Japan's crisis response capabilities and intra-governmental coordination.

Several significant legal and operational precedents were set as a result of the North Korean "spy ship" incidents. During the March 1999 incident, for the first time in the history of the MSDF, Prime Minister Obuchi Keizō ordered maritime security operations, under Article 82 of the Self Defense Law, prompting the MSDF's use of warning shots. In its wake, the MSDF and JCG also conducted their first joint exercise and drafted a manual to coordinate responses to future incidents<sup>102</sup>. In the December 2001 incident, the JCG's use of lethal force was justified legally with reference to the Fisheries Law, as the only domestic statute outlawing activities within Japan's EEZ<sup>103</sup>. The December 2001 incident increased momentum behind the proposed revision of emergency laws in case of suspected maritime intrusions that would enable the MSDF to launch ships at its own discretion<sup>104</sup>. It also spurred a formal declaration by the government backing the use of SDF vessels against suspected "suspicious ship" intrusions into Japan's EEZ<sup>105</sup>.

One of the major criticisms levelled at the JDA after the December incident related to a delay of several hours before the Agency passed on its knowledge about the "spy ship" to the JCG, prompting calls for the JDA to share intelligence more promptly with other government bodies<sup>106</sup>. Prime Minister Koizumi's government sought to improve JCG-JDA coordination, in part by updating a manual compiled after the March 1999 incident. Koizumi also sought to promote the coordinating function of the Cabinet Secretariat (*naikaku kanbō*) as a means to deepen inter-agency cooperation and to strengthen the role of the prime minister in foreign and defence policy<sup>107</sup>. After the December 2001

<sup>100</sup> 'Japanese Action Hailed', *Times Digest*, New York Times, January 14, 2002, p 2.

<sup>101</sup> Teruaki Ueno, 'Mystery Ship Saga Seen as Boon for Japan's Military', Reuters Business Briefing; and 'Navy Will Deploy a Pair of Missile Patrol Boats on Japan Sea', *Japan Digest*, February 4, 2002, p 10.

<sup>102</sup> *East Asian Strategic Review 2000*, National Institute for Defense Studies, Tokyo, 2000, pp 103-04.

<sup>103</sup> 'Yomiuri Proposals for Territorial Security', *Daily Yomiuri Online*, February 17, 2000: at [www.yomiuri.co.jp/teigen-e/pro-f.htm](http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/teigen-e/pro-f.htm)

<sup>104</sup> 'Japan Defence Agency considers law revision', Reuters News Service, January 13, 2002.

<sup>105</sup> 'Faster SDF Response on Sea Urged', *Daily Yomiuri Online*, April 12, 2002.

<sup>106</sup> According to media reports, the SDF monitoring station at Kikaijima, South of Kagoshima, intercepted radio communications from the vessel confirming its identity as North Korean (separate satellite intelligence from the United States reportedly revealed that the vessel had previously docked at a Chinese port). *Japan Press Digest*, January 14, 2002, US Embassy Tokyo, p 12.

<sup>107</sup> 'Ships manual to be revised' *Daily Yomiuri Online*, December 28, 2001; and 'New security law mooted', *Daily Yomiuri Online*, January 2, 2002.

incident, the government considered drafting special legislation that would enable discriminatory measures to be taken against North Korean vessels within Japan's EEZ<sup>108</sup>. However, the basis for doing so under UNCLOS, which allows only for the interception of vessels related to fisheries stocks and dangerous cargoes, is doubtful. Nonetheless, North Korea's vessel intrusions have "opened the way for Prime Minister Koizumi to achieve his policy goals"<sup>109</sup>.

Outside of a narrow maritime security context, at the time of writing in early March 2003, the potential missile and nuclear threat posed to Japan by North Korea appeared to be driving Japan towards a new threshold in its approach to military security. According to the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, Japanese government officials, including LDP Secretary General Yamasaki Taku, regard the next most likely act of brinkmanship on the part of Pyongyang (as part of its attempt to extract concessions from the United States) to be the launch of a *Nodong* missile<sup>110</sup>. The Koizumi government has prepared a response plan to deal with such a missile launch, which will involve publicising North Korean preparations that would be apparent to US and Japanese intelligence monitoring in advance of a launch<sup>111</sup>. In the event of a missile launch into Japanese territory or waters, the JDA Director General would be granted the authority to order the MSDF to "engage in coast guard duties" and "guard against violations of Japanese airspace"<sup>112</sup>.

However, as MSDF Aegis destroyers possess the capability only to track, rather than to intercept missiles, the government has also declared that it is legally permissible under the Constitution to attack North Korea if facing an imminent launch. This represents a significant departure from the position articulated by former JDA Director General Nukaga Fukushima in September 1998, following North Korea's *Taepodong* missile test over Honshū, that Japan had the right to *retaliate* against a missile strike (based on a government statement from 1956)<sup>113</sup>. The ASDF does not yet possess the tanker refuelling, the precision-strike capabilities or the doctrine necessary to carry out a pre-

<sup>108</sup> Confidential interview with JDA Operations Bureau official, March 5, 2002.

<sup>109</sup> National Institute for Defense Studies Professor Takesada Hideshi, quoted in Ueno Teruaki, 'Mystery ship saga seen as boon for Japan's military', Reuters News Service, December 27, 2001.

<sup>110</sup> The *Nodong*-1 has an estimated range of 1,300 kilometres, unlike the untested *Taepodong*-II, which may have sufficient range to reach the Continental United States. The fear of Japanese officials is that North Korea will elect to launch another *Nodong*-1, tested in 1993 and able to strike most targets in Japan, based on the theory that this would maintain pressure on the United States to open bilateral negotiations without provoking a military response (Hidaka Tetsuo and Kawata Takuji, 'N. Korea next move test firing missile?', *Daily Yomiuri*, March 1, 2003. [www.yomiuri.co.jp/newse/20030301wo03.htm](http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/newse/20030301wo03.htm)).

<sup>111</sup> The first two of Japan's four, domestically produced imagery satellites will be initially deployed to concentrate on North Korea, with the second pair scheduled for launch in August ('Spy Satellites to watch North Korea', *Daily Yomiuri Online*, March 4, 2003: [www.yomiuri.co.jp/newse/20030304wo41.htm](http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/newse/20030304wo41.htm)).

<sup>112</sup> 'Govt devises N. Korea Missile Plan', *Daily Yomiuri Online*, February 9, 2003: [www.yomiuri.co.jp/newse/20030209wo41.htm](http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/newse/20030209wo41.htm).



emptive attack against North Korea's missile launch sites. However, the shift in the government's position is such as to suggest that the basic framework of post-war defence constraints is being fundamentally rethought.

### **Conclusion.**

In the context of an emerging strategic dynamic in Japan-China relations, sea lanes have acquired renewed relevance as a security concern for Japan in the post Cold War period. The emergence of a military threat posed by China to Japan's sea lanes is widely perceived as possible over the long term. This is based on the underlying assumption that China eventually intends to establish itself as the leading power in East Asia and extend its sovereignty over the South China Sea and Taiwan, while exerting influence over South-east Asia. Equally, the PLAN's perceived determination to maintain its current pace of military modernisation in pursuit of a blue water capability is seen as underpinning hegemonic ambitions with real military potential by 2020-30.

Japanese strategists fear that if China acquires the military capability to interdict Japan's sea lanes this could be used as strategic leverage to discourage Japan from providing military and diplomatic support for the United States -- particularly in the context of Taiwan. Fears that China could at some point in the future seek to apply pressure directly to Japan's SLOC, for example by restricting navigational access in the South China Sea, reflect an ingrained self-perception that Japan remains vulnerable not only economically but as a politically 'handicapped' state.

North Korea's short-term challenge to Japan's maritime security is, of itself, less strategically significant than the long-range challenge posed by an assertive China. However, North Korea's resort to a broad spectrum of behaviour threatening to Japan and regional security, from involvement in transnational crime to pursuit of weapons of mass destruction, has done much since the end of the Cold War to convince both elite and mass opinion in Japan of the necessity to readjust the country's security posture as laid down by Prime Minister Yoshida in the early 1950s. While military security remains a particularly contested area of Japanese policy-making, North Korea's role in creating the political space within Japan to move beyond the confines of constitutional pacifism is likely to outlast the North Korean state itself.

---

<sup>113</sup> 'Japan could fire back if attacked: Nukaga', *Japan Times*, September 5, 1998, p 1.

The continuing attention focused within Japan on SLOC security issues, despite the disappearance of the singular military threat posed by the Soviet Union, demonstrates that its value as a security concern is deeply enduring and transcendent of change within the international system. It is ironic, yet instructive, that the southward strategic orientation of the Imperial Navy in the 1920s and 1930s, against an Anglo-American threat to Japan's resource supplies, should be mirrored in the contemporary orientation of the MSDF towards the possible emergence of a Chinese maritime threat in the same expanses of the Western Pacific fought over during the Second World War. Rather than being indicative of a recidivist militarism, the recurrent nature of these threat perceptions and the MSDF's interest in establishing a South China Sea presence point instead to the enduring nature of Japan's strategic geography.

With regard to the other recurrent theme of this thesis, sea lane concerns have also offered Japan's post-Cold War defence decision-makers important arguments to justify and expand the scope of their policy options. In contrast with the fragmentation of Japan's Cold War security concerns, to include non-state and state threats located in geographically disparate areas that are no longer bound by the unifying security framework of global bipolar rivalry, the security of sea lanes constitutes a readily identifiable core security concern. Theoretically, Japan's involvement in any maritime contingency from Yokohama to the oil terminals of the Gulf could legitimately be argued as falling within the ambit of Japan's SLOC security, in which national security is -- by extension -- at stake. As in the 1980s, when the image of Japan's vulnerability was invoked to convince a sceptical public of the need for an expanded maritime defence role with the United States, sea lane security has continuing utility for Japanese policy-makers keen to establish a common agenda for security cooperation with other maritime states in Asia.



## CONCLUSION

This thesis is driven by two questions outlined in the Introduction. The first asked how Japan's vulnerability to the disruption of its sea lanes has defined its strategic security imperatives and policy choices from the pre-war period to 2003. The second concerned the use of sea lines of communication (SLOC), instrumentally, to legitimise military activities that have been politically or constitutionally problematic in the post-1945 era. Two underlying research themes were also outlined: the influence that strategic geography has had on Japan's security policy decision-makers, and a concern with the nature of security and defence decision-making in post-war Japan.

The first major finding of this thesis is that the strategic imperative of SLOC security has remained constant for Japan throughout the period of study, despite the pronounced divide between post-1945 and pre-1945 approaches to military security. The unchanging fundamentals of Japan's maritime geography and poor resource allocation have ensured that policy-makers have consistently viewed the security of sea lanes as "a matter of life and death", an imperative that has driven official responses in such diverse fields as economic policy, diplomacy, alliance relations, defence policy and law enforcement. This challenges the widely held view of Japan's security in terms of discontinuity; reflecting the changes that have occurred since 1940 to the structure of the economy, to Japan's political and military institutions, and to its policy-makers' external threat perceptions and normative approaches to security.

The second major finding is that the emphasis in post-war defence policy and the outlook of the Maritime Self Defense Forces (MSDF) regarding the vulnerability of Japan's SLOC can be fully accounted for only by understanding its use to justify controversial aspects of defence and alliance policy. The notion of protecting Japan's maritime trade, with its appeal to widely held economic norms of security, has had an important political value for policy-makers in the wider context of Japan's defence policy since 1945.

### **I. SLOC as a strategic imperative.**

Chapter One established Japan's long-term import dependence as the essential 'pre-condition' for its SLOC security concerns. I profiled the economic importance of seaborne transportation to Japan, establishing that prolonged disruption to the import of fuels, food and raw materials would undermine the ability of the government and industry to sustain all but the most basic economic activity, eventually threatening

national and even human survival. Japan's potential vulnerability to supply disruptions has fed through into a particular defence policy concern with the security of SLOC.

In Chapter Two, I demonstrated how SLOC security has evolved as a strategic concept over the last century. I concluded that while the nature of maritime threats is far more complex and varied than was the case when Mahan and Corbett developed their theories of sea power, the military and economic importance of securing lines of communication over the sea has remained a strategic constant for maritime states. To arrive at a definition of SLOC security, I approached the concept by breaking it down into its constituent parts of sea power and lines of communications. I traced the control of communications as a concept integral to theories of sea power developed in an era when naval strategy was synonymous with the mono-dimensional aim of attaining command of the sea over rival surface battle fleets. It was shown that in the era of total warfare in the first half of the 20th century, the distinction between 'military' and 'economic' SLOC became blurred. Submarine-led anti-shipping campaigns threatened the war-fighting capacity and survival of maritime powers such as Japan and the United Kingdom, establishing that a strategy of 'sea denial' could be prosecuted independently of surface sea control.

Despite the infrequent incidence of high-intensity naval conflict in the nuclear era, in Chapters Two and Five it was demonstrated that the potential threat of the Soviet Union to interdict Western military SLOC was taken extremely seriously by Western military planners in the 1970s and 1980s. With the end of the Cold War and the run-down of the former Soviet fleet, the risk of a global conflagration involving high-intensity naval conflict in the open seas diminished sharply and, with it, the prospect of any short- to medium-term military threat to Western military SLOC in the Atlantic or Pacific, beyond the littoral seas. In place of the perceived monolithic threat to SLOC security posed by the Soviet Union, a diffuse set of threats and challenges has emerged. The definition of SLOC security has thus expanded to encompass environmental concerns, attempts at legal enclosure, piracy, terrorism, as well as residual military threats to navigation posed by regional conflicts, the most serious of which are all located near Japan's strategically vital seaborne trade routes in the Indo-Pacific region.

As Japan's industrial development proceeded after 1868 and its population grew rapidly, it became locked into a cycle of dependence on imports in order to meet its basic nutritional, energy and raw materials requirements. The drive to control its own resource base at source was a crucial determinant of Japan's imperial expansion in Asia



from the 1890s onwards and led ultimately to the reckless gamble of going to war with the United States and Great Britain in 1941. Chapter Three showed that the US submarine anti-shipping campaign against Japan wrought strategic effects at very little cost in terms of resources committed and might even have brought about Japan's defeat unaided. The memory of the wartime blockade left an indelible imprint on the 'culture' of the MSDF, extending to wider elite and societal perceptions of Japan's vulnerability.

After 1945, the enforced transition was made from an imperial economic model to a liberal-trade model, within the wider security framework of *Pax Americana*, as the means by which Japan secured access to those resources it lacked locally. This structural shift also brought about a major geographical reorientation of its supply base and export markets, increasing the importance of the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Australasia as the providers of energy and industrial commodities needed to fuel rapid industrial growth from the late 1950s to the 1970s. It also brought about a massive expansion in the volume of goods imported and the distances over which they were transported. This increased the importance to Japan's security of the three key southwestern, southern and eastern commercial shipping streams respectively connecting Japan, first, with the Middle East and Southeast Asia; second, with Australia; and third with the Americas. The strategic importance of chokepoints along these routes, where shipping was concentrated, also increased -- especially with regard to the Straits of Malacca, Japan's maritime 'life-line'.

In Chapter One, I examined ways in which Japan has the capacity to reduce its vulnerability to supply disruptions, arising from its chronic import dependence, through economic policy measures. Government and industry efforts to diversify Japan's supply base trans-regionally and to build up stockpiles of oil and raw materials to soften the impact of any short-term supply disruption were profiled and assessed. I concluded that a combination of stockpiling, resource substitution and supplier diversification, and the adoption of progressive energy policies since the 1973 oil crisis have given the Japanese economy a limited cushion against the interruption of imports along its SLOC. Moreover, if the government's objective in a security crisis was merely to survive the duration, austerity controls would provide it with the economic leeway to reduce its import requirements to one third of normal levels, or more if it chose to switch productive capacity from the export sector to manufacturing goods to meet domestic demand. Against this more qualified picture of economic vulnerability and the ability of commercial shipping to detour around most localised trouble-spots and obstructed chokepoints between terminals, the consistently high level of attention paid to SLOC

disruption in Japan's post-war defence and diplomacy appears extremely risk-sensitive, especially considering that the only major commodity supply shock to Japan's economy was delivered at source, as a result of the 1973 Arab oil embargo, rather than in transit.

Yet in spite of the efforts since 1973 to create a 'cushion' against import disruption, Japan still has only limited capacity to insulate itself from a major breakdown in seaborne transportation. The very fact that Japan's industry has developed one of the leanest energy consumption profiles of any advanced economy since the oil crises means that little 'slack' exists within the system, limiting its ability to cut energy use further without production or transportation suffering as a consequence. Japan's paucity of natural resources is so extreme relative to its basic needs that, barring a technological breakthrough in energy production releasing it from dependence on imported hydrocarbons, any serious and sustained disruption to in-bound shipping flows would inevitably be perceived by the Japanese authorities as a threat to national survival, regardless of the temporary respite afforded by stockpiles. This remained the case in 2003 as it was in 1943 when Japan's latent vulnerability to blockade was first exposed.

In the 1945-77 period, while strategic pressures and alliance politics were factors weighing in favour of Japan's rearmament, domestic constraints were paramount, as seen in the rejection of autonomous defence proposals in the late 1960s and the adoption of limits on defence capability within the *taikō*. Japan's pre-1945 military-dominated government was replaced after the war by a civilian leadership and the constitutionally enshrined goal of state non-belligerency. Since the Pacific War, without overseas territories or military bases, Japan has had no direct need for SLOC to project military power. Aside from an indirect dependence on US trans-Pacific SLOC to provide military reinforcement in case of external aggression, its interests in sea transportation have remained those of a commercial maritime power. However, despite the clear political and strategic departures from the pre-war situation, Japan's vulnerability to the disruption of its SLOC is striking as a strategic constant, which straddles the pre- and post-1945 divide.

Other concerns of strategic geography have certainly 'carried over' from the pre-war period, as seen in a basic continuity in Japan's perceptions of the Korean peninsula as integral to its security. However, Japan's interest in SLOC is peculiar among its post-war security concerns, which are more notable for their diminished strategic content, in that Japan's potential exposure to a major disruption of seaborne imports *increased* in line with the exponential growth of its overseas trade and resource needs. By increasing



the extent of its dependence on foreign sources of supply, and on a new and more geographically remote set of nations, many of which were located in areas of high geopolitical risk, Japan's integration within the Western liberal economic trading system brought about a concomitant *strategic* requirement to ensure that an adequate level of naval protection (direct or indirect) was maintained in both the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The expansion of Japan's overseas trade thus created its own powerful rationale for forming a military alliance with the only maritime power capable of extending such protection, the United States.

The importance of the maritime influence on Japan's strategy is reflected in its predominant pattern of alliances with major naval powers (Great Britain from 1902-22 and the United States from 1951 to the present). Unlike the brief and largely passive wartime 'axis' with the continental power of Nazi Germany, Japan entered into these more enduring alliances, and particularly the US-Japan Alliance, as a strategic response to the problem of how to secure overseas access to markets and natural resources, by aggregating its own naval capabilities with those of the globally dominant maritime power.

In Chapter Four, I showed how Japan's post-1945 security policy was redefined, against the backdrop of sweeping change at the systemic, transnational and domestic levels, in the Yoshida Doctrine. The doctrine reflected reduced threat perceptions compared with the pre-war period and Yoshida's perception that Japan's resource needs could optimally be met via entry into a US-led trading order within which Japan's security would be guaranteed by the United States, leaving the government and private industry free to invest their energies in the tasks of reconstruction and recovery.

Arguments in favour of the development of a large navy configured for an independent 'sea lane defence' role resurfaced surprisingly quickly in Japan after the Second World War and received a level of political backing that sharply contrasted with official reluctance to accede to US pressure to create a large army. Yoshida and subsequent administrations acknowledged that contributory forces were a *political* necessity. However, in the case of naval forces official support was also forthcoming owing to the *strategic* importance of protecting Japan's seaborne trade beyond its territorial waters.

As demonstrated in Chapters Three and Four, those former Imperial Navy officers who filled the ranks of the post-war maritime security forces, or who entered business and politics, carried their wartime experiences with them and the conviction that the Imperial

Navy had erred in not doing more to protect Japan's merchant fleet. The task of trade protection was thus one that quickly established itself as a core priority for Japan's reconstituted naval forces as a 'lesson learned' from the Pacific War.

Japan's security links with the United States, especially the close navy-to-navy relationship, were crucial to the formation, structure and operational orientation of the MSDF. However, concerns about the security of sea lanes also drove Japanese decision-makers' perceptions and responses independently, by exposing a perceived weakness in the security guarantee extended to Japan by the United States, under the terms of the Security Treaty. As seen in Chapter Four, Sekino Hideo's notion of a stand-alone Japanese navy oriented to a SLOC protection role in the Western Pacific stemmed partly from a lack of confidence that the US defence guarantee covering Japanese territory would apply to Japanese shipping on the high seas. This fed the concern that a hostile power might target Japan's SLOC, in addition to their constituting an independent strategic weak-point, as the Achilles Heel of alliance cohesion.

The vulnerability of SLOC has thus been perceived within Japan in political terms as well as in military and economic terms. In Chapters Four to Eight the importance given to the 'psychological' impact of attacks on shipping by Japanese analysts and defence planners was demonstrated repeatedly. This partly reflects concerns that attacks on shipping could be used to test the margins of the US security guarantee. At a domestic level, politicians and defence officials have also feared that even small-scale or clandestine attacks on Japan's shipping interests could be used by hostile states to exacerbate political divisions over questions of military security and the constitutional legitimacy of the Self Defence Forces (SDF), or to put pressure on Japan to adopt an accommodative posture, for example in relation to disputed maritime territorial claims.

Chapter Five showed that in the 1977-90 period, alliance politics were the main imperative of Japan's SLOC security policy responses and the main driver of change in Japan's approach to defence. While defence constraints remained in place, Japan's acquiescence in closer defence cooperation reflected not only a 'political' response to US burden-sharing pressure, but also the emergence of independent concerns within Japan about the relative decline of US power and the build-up of Soviet military power in the Far East. The rise of the Soviet sea lane threat to the top of the agenda of the US-Japan Alliance in the late Cold War reflected a wider strategic context shaped by the relative decline in US military power vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and Washington's efforts to increase Japan's military support as an alliance partner, chiefly by augmenting



the maritime capabilities of the SDF. MSDF plans for the protection of shipping in Second World War-style convoys, in place since the 1960s, had by the 1980s given way to a more expansive concept of area defence. The prospective role of the MSDF in sea lane defence was no longer limited to the defensive task of convoying oil tankers and commercial shipping, and in the event of a superpower conflict, would have involved Japanese forces operating at a functionally integrated level alongside US forces deployed to carry out the US Maritime Strategy in the Northwest Pacific. Indeed, the success of US war plans required SDF cooperation in sealing off Soviet forces in the Sea of Japan, as well as in coordinated efforts to track and destroy Soviet submarines operating in the Pacific. These actions went far beyond the scope of Japan's official defence posture, as outlined in the *taikō* based on dealing "with any situation up to the level of limited and small-scale aggression".

In the context of the various state and non-state level potential threats faced by Japan in 1990-2003, the importance of Japan's independent strategic perceptions are rising to the fore, as the primary imperative of defence policy, for first time in post-war era. In Chapter Seven, I showed that Japan's security policy-making community has generally moved towards a more 'realist' viewpoint of regional and global security, a shift of perception that has brought about a renewed emphasis on the US-Japan Alliance and its reshaping from an anti-Soviet compact in the late Cold War to a 'situationally' defined framework for bilateral defence cooperation potentially extending as far as the Gulf. I also examined how Japan has adopted security initiatives independently of the United States, via its involvement in United Nations peace-keeping, its exploration of multilateral security dialogue and development of bilateral defence links with a range of third countries, focused on the Asia-Pacific region, where the most obvious candidates for potential state-level threats to Japan's security are located.

In a more uncertain post-Cold War environment, geopolitical risk is concentrated in several regions along the length of Japan's major energy arterial SLOC, from the Gulf, via South Asia, Southeast Asia and East Asia. Chapter Eight showed that among potential state-level threats, China has assumed the central place in Japanese defence planners' long-range view. Japan's economically crucial SLOC to the Middle East and Southeast Asia are seen as potentially exposed to a rising naval power that possesses a long seaboard astride Japan's southern maritime approaches. The potential for China's expanding economy and rising resource needs to develop in competition with those of Japan and other import-dependent states in Asia has again raised the vulnerability of Japan's supply routes to the threat of deliberate interdiction by a hostile maritime power.

Japanese policy-makers recognise that the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) significantly lags behind MSDF capabilities in most areas, quite apart from the gulf that separates it from the US Navy. However, Japan's concern about China's naval modernisation is long term and relates equally to the perceived skill of its policy-makers in blending military pressure with other elements of national power in the pursuit of a clearly defined grand strategy. Japan's concern about the security of its sea lanes is honed in the context of fears that China is pursuing a strategy aimed eventually at establishing hegemony, on land, over the Korean Peninsula, Taiwan and continental Southeast Asia and maritime sway over the East and South China Sea. The ambition of those within the PLAN who aim to extend China's maritime defence zone to Southeast Asia and the 'second island chain' in the Western Pacific is viewed as inherently threatening in Japan, given the overlap with its most important economic SLOC.

Chapter Two concluded that piracy is more of an 'irritant' to the global maritime transportation system than a systemic threat. However, Chapter Seven made clear that a high level of private and official attention is accorded to piracy as a threat by Japanese security policy-makers. With regard to the challenge posed potentially to Japan's SLOC security by Islamic terrorism, although Japan's shipping interests were not directly targeted in the October 2002 attack on the *Limburg* off Yemen, the potential terrorism threat to Japan's SLOC security is greater than that posed by piracy. One of al-Qaida's objectives is to inflict the maximum damage possible to Western economic interests in Muslim countries, potentially exposing Japan's oil supplies and shipping routes through the Middle East and maritime Southeast Asia to attack.

Japan's sea lane diplomacy has sought to maintain the physical parameters of safe navigation in the Straits of Malacca and to limit the impact on navigational access of jurisdictional claims by regional states, especially those of Indonesia. In Chapter Six, I concluded that Japan's failure to secure a role in the administration of the Straits of Malacca in 1971, which led to the joint Indonesian-Malaysian declaration 'de-internationalising' the straits, marked the low-point for its SLOC diplomacy in the region. In the context of this failure and anti-Japanese riots across Southeast Asian capitals in the mid-1970s, Tokyo re-evaluated its diplomacy towards the region, prompting a major redirection of aid flows to reflect Southeast Asia's strategic importance to Japan. Technical and financial assistance disbursed to the coastal states through the non-official Malacca Straits Council established a quasi-official framework of cooperation with Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore leading to the adoption of the



Traffic Separation Scheme and Under-keel Clearance limit in 1977, which have facilitated safe access through the straits and lessened coastal states' concerns about collisions and spillages resulting from unregulated shipping traffic. Japan's financing of the Rolling Fund has contained disputes with the straits states about how to apportion the financial burden of navigational safety measures in the straits. Generally, Japan has benefited by conducting its sea lane diplomacy indirectly through the Malacca Straits Council, while relying on the International Maritime Organisation and other states to press overtly for navigational freedoms to be upheld. With the exception of the transit of nuclear cargoes through the region, on which it has faced firm opposition, Japan has thus avoided any serious limitation to its commercial transit rights resulting from coastal states' jurisdictional claims.

While Japan's sea lane diplomacy has been successful in terms of balancing its interests in free and safe navigation with the concerns of coastal states in Southeast Asia, official and private efforts have had less measurable influence in terms of ameliorating the threats posed to shipping by piracy, the prospect of Islamic maritime terrorism, or the potential for regional conflict in the South China Sea. Regarding the last of these, the position of China, as an extra-regional great power less beholden to aid and other forms of 'soft' leverage, is the key strategic variable -- making Japan's sea lane diplomacy in South-east Asia ultimately subordinate to balance of power concerns.

## **II. SLOC security as an instrumental policy concern.**

Notwithstanding the depth of genuine concern in Japan about the vulnerability of its SLOC to disruption, this thesis has shown that controversial defence policy measures have been justified nominally as responses aimed at securing maritime traffic or lessening the vulnerability of Japan's sea lanes. At various times, in its different guises, SLOC protection has been employed as a rationale to build up the level of Japan's post-war naval capabilities, to expand the functional and geographical scope of US-Japan Alliance cooperation and to explore security cooperation with other maritime states in the Asia-Pacific. Towards achieving these aims SLOC protection has offered advantages in several areas.

First, sea lane defence has presented the MSDF with a rationale that has enabled its officers and other pro-naval advocates to defend their budgetary claims and to argue the necessity of maintaining a large surface fleet configured for blue water operations. The Mahanian dictum that the necessity of a navy springs from the existence of peaceful shipping has proved useful in the context of Japan's constitutional pacifism for rebutting

the arguments of those such as Kaihara Osamu, profiled in Chapter Four, that the MSDF should be downsized and reconfigured to perform in a minimalist counter-invasion and coastal defence role.

Second, the rationale for a Japanese naval role in trade protection accorded with the priority given to economic security and defence constraints within the Yoshida Doctrine. Widespread consensus among the various government actors with responsibility for security policy that Japan required reliable and safe access to natural resources overseas helped the cause of naval rearmament to proceed more smoothly than that of the Ground Self Defense Forces (GSDF). As a 'defensive' task, sea lane protection could be accommodated more easily within the constraints of the Constitution than any other aspects of defence policy involving the extra-territorial dispatch of the SDF. Chapter Five showed that in the 1970s and 1980s, both the popular memory of the wartime blockade and fears of supply disruptions re-awoken by the 1973 oil crisis were used to persuade a domestic audience of the need for Japan to engage in deepening maritime defence cooperation with the United States.

Third, as a concept that is inherently vague in geographical and operational terms, sea lane defence lent itself particularly well to justifying expanded defence cooperation with the United States during the late Cold War. During the 1980s, such cooperation drew Japan steadily closer towards a *de facto* collective self-defence posture vis-à-vis the United States, as a military ally integrated into US Cold War military strategy. Without the political 'cover' afforded by sea lane defence, intensified alliance cooperation would certainly have encountered greater political resistance within Japan.

Fourth, in the post-Cold War era, appeals to sea lane security have continuing appeal not only in the context of legitimising defence policy to a domestic audience, but also in presenting the protection of maritime transportation as an important security concern that is shared by all maritime trading states in the region. For advocates of an expanded security role in Japan, as seen in Chapters Seven and Eight, it has thus provided a non-threatening pretext on which to build security cooperation with other states that share a common interest in SLOC security.

Fifth, Chapter Seven showed that piracy is an issue of sea lane security that has been used as a pretext to develop Japan's regional security role since the end of the Cold War, albeit with mixed success. It has been used as a vehicle both to explore security cooperation with other states in East Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia, as well as to



establish a limited Japanese maritime presence in the Straits of Malacca, through the Japan Coast Guard. As a constabulary concern, Japan's anti-piracy involvement offers political advantages, by offering a focus for security cooperation that does not target any particular state, thus lowering the political costs for participants. Japan's anti-piracy initiatives are also intended as a confidence-building measure designed to demonstrate its reliability and responsibility as a security partner, particularly to Southeast Asian states -- the maritime equivalent of Japan's UN peacekeeping troop deployment to Cambodia in 1993. Moreover, it is an area in which Japan can draw on its comparative advantage in capacity-building, as a donor of technical and financial aid. In strategic terms, Japan's sponsorship of anti-piracy cooperation serves the unstated purpose of laying the diplomatic infrastructure for a future 'maritime coalition', should the Japanese government decide to counter the activities of a more assertive China, or to compensate for a weakening of the Alliance with the United States.

The MSDF has proved adept at the use of sea lane security and the safety of maritime transportation as pretexts and precedents to widen the scope of its operations, both geographically and legally. Although, as seen in Chapter Four, the 1976 *taikō* did not mention sea lane defence among the MSDF's roles, during the 1970s the MSDF retained its blue water escort flotilla formations in spite of a political and fiscal climate that favoured the formalisation of defence constraints. Chapter Five showed how, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the rationale of defending Japan's sea lanes -- in tandem with US political pressure -- enabled the MSDF to expand its budgetary claims and to deepen its cooperation with the US Navy. In terms of force structure, acquisitions justified under the rubric of sea lane defence facilitated improvements in anti-submarine and mine warfare capabilities that outstripped those of the US Seventh Fleet in certain areas by the end of the Cold War and transformed the MSDF into a highly potent navy. The MSDF also argued successfully for its participation in the RIMPAC exercises from 1980 on the strength of its SLOC defence responsibilities. The Air Self Defense Force and even the Ground Self Defense Force recognised the value of sea lane defence as a rationale to boost or to defend their budgetary shares in the 1980s.

As seen in Chapter Seven, the MSDF's deployment to the Arabian Sea in November 2001 exemplifies the trend in a contemporary context. The MSDF flotilla was dispatched under the terms of the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law, initially for a period of six months to "gather information" in support of US-led operations in Afghanistan. Since then the deployment has been twice extended and substantially reinforced. The terms of the MSDF's activities in the Arabian Sea have also been

expanded to include refuelling naval vessels from several other countries. The government has also drawn up plans to protect oil tankers in the Gulf, for which the forces in place in the region could readily be used. Regardless of whether Prime Minister Junichirō Koizumi's administration decides to extend support to US and UK forces involved in any offensive against Iraq, the value of the MSDF's deployment as a precedent for a future Japanese naval presence in the Indian Ocean and along the length of its most important economic SLOC to the Gulf has been established.

### **III. Japan's SLOC security prospects.**

This thesis has established that, as a function of its industrial structure, resource allocation and geopolitical location far from its sources of supply and close to potentially hostile powers, Japan's SLOC security is a 'permanent' strategic problem for its security decision-makers.

Japan's demographic transition to a smaller, older population and the hollowing out of its industrial base, while not unstoppable, are trends that are both likely to continue. This will have a significant impact over medium- to long-term consumption trends, reducing Japan's absolute energy and resource requirements. Although increasing use of natural gas will continue to erode oil's share in primary energy production, the nuclear sector is unlikely to fulfill the promise of energy autonomy that it once held out to policy-makers. Thus, the needs of a residual onshore industrial base, domestic transportation and electric power demand will continue to require large volumes of imported resources, while the economy will remain reliant on oil for at least another 30-40 years. Russia and other non-Gulf based producers hold out some prospect for reducing Japan's dependence on Middle Eastern oil energy supplies, but the draw-down of Southeast Asian oil and gas exports to Japan and the global dominance of Gulf-region reserves are likely to prevent radical change in Japan's energy import patterns until technology supplies cheaper alternatives to fossil fuels. Ensuring the security of its southern SLOC to the Middle East will therefore remain essential.

As most of the projected increase in maritime traffic through the Straits of Malacca will be created by countries other than Japan, Tokyo will progressively lose its position as the primary user of the straits, most probably to China, whose resource needs and export trade will continue to undergo rapid expansion if its domestic growth potential can be tapped and if multinationals continue to relocate production there. The growing profile of non-Japanese North-east Asian users in the Southeast Asian SLOC will in one sense simplify Japan's task of maintaining safe navigational access, by further



internationalising the issue. However, unless Southeast Asian states respond positively to the prospect of Japan as a strategic counterweight to China, the leverage of its negotiating position in the region is likely to decline over time as its pre-eminent economic position is eroded.

With regard to the terrorist threat to Japan's SLOC interests, the most important challenge will be to maintain security around the hard and soft infrastructure underpinning the international shipping industry, especially at major Asian ports where it is most concentrated and vulnerable. Provided this can be achieved, Japan can expect to reap additional security benefits from the flexibility of commercial shipping to follow diversionary routes, as well as the availability of spare capacity to compensate for the lengthening of its maritime supply chain.

At the time of writing, in early March 2003, among the short to medium-range security concerns faced by Japan, the nuclear and missile threats posed by North Korea commanded most attention among Japan's security planners, while the question of whether to extend diplomatic and non-combat military support for any US attack on Iraq also weighed over Japan's policy-makers. How they respond to these concurrent challenges is likely to have an important bearing not only on the future of Japan's SLOC security, but also the basic orientation of its defence policy. The North Korean nuclear crisis -- the second in ten years -- is likely to encourage the development of a more independent strategic defence posture for Japan, even if the stand-off between Pyongyang and Washington is resolved diplomatically.

The broad array of threats posed by North Korea, from transnational crime to potentially nuclear-equipped missiles, constitutes a major source of external strategic pressure upon Japan. Domestically, the negative disposition of Japanese popular opinion towards North Korea, especially since its admission to abducting Japanese nationals, means that public tolerance of policy measures justified in relation to the 'North Korean threat' is higher than for similar measures justified in relation to other prospective threats. However, precedents established in the narrow context of a potential North Korean missile test as well as counter-terrorism naval cooperation with third countries in the Arabian Sea serve nonetheless to broaden the range of legally and politically acceptable defence activities, in conformity with the pattern of incremental change in Japan's defence policy throughout the post-1954 era. While the Koizumi administration has substantially increased the pace of adjustment in Japan's defence and security policy since September 2001, the not inconsiderable chance that the Liberal Democratic Party

will in future unite behind Ishihara Shintaro, or a similar popular nationalist outside the formal party structure, raises the possibility that a more assertive defence policy stance may follow Koizumi. The record of Nakasone Yasuhiro, as a conservative nationalist who followed a less radical defence policy agenda as premier than he had advocated as a Diet politician, suggests that incumbency imposes its own constraints. Many ordinary Japanese and elected officials are also genuinely reluctant to jettison post-war constitutional constraints on defence capability. Nonetheless, against a background of economic malaise, electoral disenchantment with established political parties and popular opinion sensitised to a North Korean threat, the political conditions for a pro-defence policy platform have never been more propitious in post-war Japan. Despite the fiscal constraints imposed by Japan's large burden of public debt, a policy of increased security spending justified as a form of fiscal stimulus to revive an otherwise moribund domestic economy could even help to overcome resistance among economic policy-makers traditionally opposed to military outlays on grounds of fiscal prudence.

Despite the short-term preoccupation of Japanese security planners with North Korea, Japan's longer-term threat horizons will centre on strategies to cope with the rise of China and the fear that this will lead to a diminution of Japan's influence in Southeast Asia and elsewhere on the continent of Asia. The abiding perception that Japan's SLOC are most vulnerable to interdiction beyond the Bashi Channel, and particularly in the South China Sea, could, under the right political conditions, lead to an increased MSDF presence in the South China Sea and the possibility that Japan will seek to conclude limited basing arrangements with Southeast Asian states including the Philippines and Singapore, without which the logistical difficulties of sustaining long-range deployments of ships and aircraft would impose strains on SDF capabilities.

In the future, SLOC security will continue to serve as the nexus for several strands within Japan's defence and security policy-making. Economically, concerns over supply disruptions in transit will drive self-help policies to lessen their economic impact. Diplomatically, Japan will continue to emphasise the importance of free and safe navigation in its relations with coastal states adjacent to its SLOC in Southeast Asia and elsewhere. Strategically, sea lane defence will continue to bridge the gap between Japan's territorially defined defence interests and the security of maritime transportation as far as the Gulf. This could provide the impetus for a forward maritime defence posture, either in alliance with a naval hegemonic power or as part of an as yet undetermined maritime coalition.



APPENDICES

**Appendix 1:** Breakdown of Japan’s primary energy supply for selected years (%)

	FY1960	FY1970	FY1980	FY1990	FY1996	FY1999
petroleum	37.6	71.9	66.1	58.3	55.2	52.0
coal	41.2	19.9	17.0	16.6	16.4	17.4
gas	0.9	1.2	6.1	10.1	11.4	12.7
hydro	15.7	5.6	5.2	4.2	3.4	3.6
nuclear	--	0.3	4.7	9.4	12.3	13.0
geothermal	--	--	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
other	4.6	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.1	1.1

**Appendix 2:** Major navigational concepts introduced under UNCLOS

The entry into force of UNCLOS in 1994 introduced the following jurisdictional concepts into international law, although their development over the three LOS Conventions (1958, 1973 and 1982), and through state practice and customary law was an incremental process:

Territorial seas.

UNCLOS recognises the right of coastal states to extend their territorial waters to 12 nautical miles (nm), throughout which state sovereignty is fully exercised, and to exercise customs and immigration controls in a contiguous zone for a further 12 nm<sup>1</sup>. Prior to UNCLOS, territorial seas of widely varying dimensions had been claimed, varying from 3 nm to 200 nm, but the 12 nm limit had become established as an international norm long before the Convention entered into force. The extension of territorial seas has brought a number of straits used for international navigation which formerly contained high-seas corridors, within the sole or shared jurisdiction of coastal straits.

Archipelagic waters.

The waters enclosed within baselines drawn from the outermost edges of the 14 designated archipelagos under UNCLOS have a legal status similar to territorial seas. However, one of the ‘grey areas’ identified in UNCLOS legislation concerns whether

<sup>1</sup> Ivan Shearer, ‘Current Law of the Sea Issues’, in Sam Bateman and Ross Babbage (eds.), *Maritime Change: Issues for Asia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1993, p 52.

prescriptive and enforcement jurisdiction that applies in territorial seas extends to archipelagic waters<sup>2</sup>.

#### Exclusive Economic Zones.

Part V of the 1982 UNCLOS draft recognised Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) out to 200 nautical miles. The concept of the EEZ arose as a compromise aimed at providing coastal states with legal ownership over marine resources out to 200 nm, as a *quid pro quo* for confining their territorial-sea claims to 12 miles. Within their EEZ, coastal states are empowered to apprehend vessels that pose a risk of pollution to the coastline or resources of the EEZ<sup>3</sup>. The authority of coastal states does not extend to naval vessels or military aircraft, however, which enjoy high seas freedoms outside territorial seas or archipelagic waters.

A number of military maritime zones with the potential to affect shipping and aviation have also been declared outside of the framework of UNCLOS. These include warning and exclusion zones declared by China, in the north of the Yellow Sea and north of Taiwan; Taiwan's own exclusion zone in the Taiwan Strait; North Korea's 70-nm military zones off both its coastlines and the United States has a 200-mile warning area in effect around its missile testing range, near Kwajalein in the Pacific<sup>4</sup>. A number of states, including Japan, and regional organisations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have declared nuclear weapons free zones, banning the admission of nuclear weapons and/or nuclear-powered warships.

#### Passage regimes.

Aside from high seas passage, which was legally unaffected by UNCLOS (although the area of high seas itself was dramatically curtailed), three transit regimes were eventually adopted as part of the new regime. Firstly, the pre-existing concept of 'innocent passage' was incorporated, applying to navigation through territorial seas and, generally, within archipelagic waters. Secondly, the regime of 'transit passage' was created to deal with transit through international straits. Thirdly, 'archipelagic sea lanes passage' was developed to govern passage through sea lanes designated within archipelagic waters:

<sup>2</sup> See Eric Jaap Molenaar, in Sam Bateman (ed.) *Maritime Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region: Current Situation and Prospects*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, No. 132, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1999, pp 109-110.

<sup>3</sup> Ivan Shearer, 'Current Law of the Sea Issues', in Sam Bateman and Ross Babbage (eds.), *Maritime Change: Issues for Asia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1993, pp 54-62.



- International straits containing high seas areas. Where international straits are wide enough that a high seas corridor remains despite the extension of territorial seas to 12 nm, or in such cases where the coastal state has chosen not to extend its territorial sea, navigation is legally unencumbered by UNCLOS. High seas corridors remain in the Sōya, Tsugarū, Tsushima and Osumi straits around Japan, the Taiwan and Luzon Straits/Bashi Channel, the Torres Strait and the Strait of Hormuz.
- Innocent passage. The rules of Innocent Passage, under Article 19(2) of UNCLOS, confer passage rights through territorial waters for ships (and aircraft), provided they engage in “continuous and expeditious passage which is not prejudicial to the peace, good order, or security of coastal states”. Although there is nothing expressly to exclude naval vessels from innocent passage in the UNCLOS text, some states request prior notification before foreign naval vessels enter their territorial or archipelagic waters<sup>5</sup>. Under the terms of innocent passage, warships are not supposed to engage in flying operations and submarines are required to proceed, surfaced, with their flags displayed. In archipelagic waters, innocent passage applies outside of nominated sea lanes where more a liberal transit regime obtains. Coastal states have limited rights to suspend innocent passage for security reasons or to carry out weapons exercises, provided such closures are temporary and do not discriminate between different flag-states<sup>6</sup>. Non-suspendable innocent passage, as formerly applied to international straits was superseded in UNCLOS by the new regime of ‘transit passage’.
- Transit passage. Transit passage confers the right of transit through a strait connecting one high seas area or EEZ with another, provided passage (and overflight) is continuous and expeditious. Under the regime of transit passage (which, unlike innocent passage, is non-suspendable) warships and military aircraft may proceed in their normal operational mode<sup>7</sup>. The terms of transit passage under UNCLOS met most of the criteria of ‘free passage in international straits’ set by the maritime powers, representing a victory over the coastal states’ attempts to gain uniform application throughout their territorial waters, regardless of their use for international navigation.

---

<sup>4</sup> Linda Paul, in Sam Bateman (ed.) *Maritime Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region: Current Situation and Prospects*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, No. 132, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1999, pp 127-28.

<sup>5</sup> Ivan Shearer, ‘Current Law of the Sea Issues’, in Sam Bateman and Ross Babbage (eds.), *Maritime Change: Issues for Asia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1993, p 56.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p 55.

- Archipelagic sea lanes passage. UNCLOS allows for archipelagic states to designate special sea lanes within archipelagic waters, conferring “the exercise of the rights of navigation and overflight in the normal mode for the purpose of continuous and expeditious transit through an archipelago between one part of the high seas or an exclusive economic zone and another part of the high seas or an exclusive economic zone”. These sea lanes, which may be up to 50 nm in width are in effect ‘virtual straits’ where vessels enjoy the same rights as under transit passage. While the advantage of archipelagic sea lanes (ASL) passage to the maritime state is that it confers more liberal transit conditions than innocent passage, concern has been expressed at the potential for archipelagic states to compel foreign shipping to pass through ASLs, nullifying the application of innocent passage elsewhere within archipelagic waters<sup>8</sup>.

**Appendix 3:** Piracy incidents involving Japanese ships in the Straits of Malacca, 1994-2000

Location	Date	Vessel type/	Damage/	Incident Report
Malacca Strait	Nov. 2000	BULK CARRIER Registry Unknown, 15,000 dwt	MONEY AND GOODS. NO HUMAN DAMAGE	AT AROUND 17:28PM ON NOVEMBER 11, A SHIP ON A VOYAGE IN THE MALACCA STRAIT WAS BOARDED BY PIRATES AND THE WHOLE CREW WAS TAKEN HOSTAGE. THE PIRATES FLED AFTER TAKING MONEY AND GOODS. THE SHIP RESUMED ITS VOYAGE TO JAPAN AFTER REFUELING IN SINGAPORE
Malacca Strait (01-50.5N 102-32E)	July 2000	BULK CARRIER Liberia, 25,000 dwt	NONE	AT AROUND 2200 HOURS ON 22 JULY PIRACY ATTEMPT IN HEAVY TRAFFIC (6 PERSONS IN ONE CRAFT OPEN TYPE) MADE CLOSE APPROACH ABOUT 5 METRES

<sup>7</sup> Hasjim Djalal, *Indonesia and the Law of the Sea*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1995, pp 83-84.

<sup>8</sup> See Eric Jaap Molenaar, in Sam Bateman (ed), *Maritime Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region: Current Situation and Prospects*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, No. 132, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1999, pp 97-121.



				FROM PORT QUARTER READY TO POSITION BAMBOO HOOK BUT DISCONTINUED DUE TO SHIP'S CREW PRESENCE.
Malacca Strait	May 2000	LPG/LNG CARRIER Japan, 111,000 dwt	NONE	ON 27 MAY WHILE SAILING OFF P.UNDAN (THE STR. OF MALACCA) FOUND A SMALL HIGH-SPEED BOAT APPROACHING FROM BEHIND AND THE CREW'S PRECAUTION WITH SIGNAL LAMP EXPELLED IT.
Malacca Strait	Jan. 2000	BULK CARRIER Panama, 7,000 dwt	\$14,000	AROUND 0514 HOURS FIVE PIRATES ATTACKED.
Singapore Strait	Mar. 1999	OIL TANKER Panama, 8,000 dwt	US\$3,382 + valuables	PIRATES TRESPASSED
Phillip Channel	Mar. 1999	OIL TANKER Panama 55,000 dwt	US\$1,850 + boxes of medicine	SAILING EAST AROUND 00:00 HOURS PIRATES TRESPASSED THROUGH THE DOOR BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN LOCKED/LOOKED AROUND THE CAPTAIN'S ROOM AND STOLE MONEY/MEDICINE THOUGH THE VESSEL HAD CARRIED OUT TRAINING AGAINST PIRACY
Phillip Channel	Jan. 1999	CHEMICAL TANKER Panama, 4,000 dwt	US\$1,400 + clothing	BEFORE DAWN FOUR PIRATES TRESPASSED ON CAPTAIN'S ROOM, ROBBED AND RESTRAINED THE CAPTAIN.
Malacca Strait (Indonesi	Sept. 1998	General Cargo Panama,	Vessel itself, US3.5	THE WHOLE VESSEL DISAPPEARED AND FINALLY FOUND WITH ANOTHER NAME;

a)		3,000 dwt	million + 14 crew members	ALL CARGO (ALLUMINIUM INGOTS) SOLD ON
Near Horsburg h lighthouse	1997	LPG/LNG CARRIER Panama 45,000 dwt	US\$7700	UNCONFIRMED
Phillip Channel	Jan. 1994	OIL TANKER Japan, unknown tonnage	US\$6114	DURING SAILING PIRATES WITH SWORDS TRESPASSED ESCAPING FROM PIRACY WATCH AND DISCHARGING WATER BY FIRE HOSE WITH LIGHTING AT POOP DECK
Malacca Strait	Jan. 1994	BULK CARRIER Liberia, 22,000 dwt	NONE (ATTEM PTED)	DURING SAILING A PIRATE SEEN IN NAVIGATION DEPARTMENT WHO RAN AWAY FRIGHTENED AT CREW'S CHALLENGE

Source: Nippon Foundation Piracy Database: db01.nippon-foundation.or.jp/cgi-bin/zaidan/search\_e.cgi



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books and monographs.

- Agawa, Naoyuki. *Umi no Yūjō* ('Friendship of the Sea'), Chuō Kōronsha, Tokyo, 2001.
- Akaha, Tsuneo. *Japan in Global Ocean Politics*, University of Hawaii Press and Law of the Sea Institute, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1985.
- Alagappa, Muthiah (ed.). *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences*, Stanford University Press, California, 1998.
- Armacost, Michael H. *Friends or Rivals? The Insider's Account of U.S.-Japan Relations*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1996.
- Auer, James E. *The Postwar Rearmament of Japanese Maritime Forces, 1945-71*, Praeger, New York, 1973.
- Ball, Desmond. *Escalation and the Use of Nuclear Weapons*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 79, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1991.
- Ball, Desmond and Richelson, Jeffrey T. *The Ties That Bind: Intelligence Cooperation between the UKUSA Countries*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1985.
- Ball, Desmond and Euan Graham. *Japan's Airborne SIGINT Capabilities*, SDSC Working Paper No.11, Australian National University, Canberra, 2000.
- Barnett, Robert W. *Beyond War: Japan's Concept of Comprehensive National Security*, Pergamon Brasseys, Washington D.C., 1984.
- Bateman, Sam (ed.). *Maritime Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region: Current Situation and Prospects*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 132, SDSC, Australian National University, Canberra, 1999.
- Bateman, Sam and Bates, Stephen (eds.). *Calming the Waters: Initiatives for Asia Pacific Maritime Cooperation*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 114, SDSC, Australian National University, Canberra, 1996.
- , *The Seas Unite: Maritime Cooperation in the Asia Pacific Region*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 118, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1996.
- , *Shipping and Regional Security*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 129, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1998.
- Beasley, W.G. *The Rise of Modern Japan*, Charles E. Tuttle Company, Tokyo, 1990.
- , *Japanese Imperialism 1894-1945*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987.

- Blair, Clay Jr. *Silent Victory: The U.S. Submarine War Against Japan*, J.B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia and New York, 1975.
- Brodie, Bernard. *A Layman's Guide to Naval Strategy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1943.
- Buck, James, H. (ed.). *The Modern Japanese Military System*, Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, California, 1975.
- Bywater, Hector C. *Navies and Nations: A Review of Naval Developments since the Great War*, Constable and Company, London, 1927.
- Castex, Raoul. *Strategic Theories: Selections translated and edited, with an introduction, by Eugenia C. Kiesling*, Naval Institute Press Classics of Seapower Series, Annapolis 1994, Especially. Chapter 2: 'Maritime Communications'.
- Center for Naval Analyses/Korea Institute for Defense Analyses, The National Institute for Defense Studies. *Trilateral Naval Cooperation: A Workshop Report*, Center for Naval Analyses, Alexandria, Virginia, 1997.
- Center for Naval Analyses/Korea Institute for Defense Analyses, The Okazaki Institute. *Trilateral Naval Cooperation: Workshop II*, Center for Naval Analyses, Alexandria, Virginia, May 1998.
- , *Trilateral Naval Cooperation: Workshop III*, Center for Naval Analyses, Alexandria, Virginia, October 1999.
- Chapman, John W. M., Drifte, Reinhard, and Gow, Ian T. M. *Japan's Quest for Comprehensive Security: Defence, Diplomacy, Dependence*, Frances Pinter, London, 1983.
- Choucri, Nazli, North, Robert C., Yamakage, Susumu. *The Challenge of Japan Before World War II and After: A Study of National Growth and Expansion*, Routledge, London, 1992.
- Clesse, Armand, Inoguchi, Takashi, Keehn, E.B. and Stockwin, J.A.A. (eds.). *The Vitality of Japan: Sources of National Strength and Weakness*, St Antony's Press, Oxford, 1997.
- Corbett, Julian S. *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, Naval Institute Press Classics of Sea Power Series, Annapolis, 1988.
- Curtis, Gerald, L. (ed.). *Japan's Foreign Policy: After the Cold War: Coping with Change*, M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 1993.



- Dibb, Paul. *Force Modernisation in Asia: Towards 2000 and Beyond*, SDSC Working Paper No. 306, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1997.
- Djalal, Dino Patti. *The Geopolitics of Indonesia's Maritime Territorial Policy*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1996.
- Djalal, Hasjim. *Indonesia and the Law of the Sea*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, 1995.
- Dower, John, W. *Empire and Aftermath: Yoshida Shigeru and the Japanese Experience, 1878-1954*, Harvard East Asian Studies Monographs, 1979.
- Drifte, Reinhard. *Japan's Foreign Policy*, Royal Institute of International Affairs/Routledge, London, 1990.
- , *The Security Factor in Japan's Foreign Policy, 1945-1952*, Saltire Press, Ripe, 1983.
- Evans, David C. and Mark R. Peattie. *Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997.
- Friedman, George and Lebard, Meredith. *The Coming War with Japan*, St Martin's Press, New York, 1991.
- Friedman, Norman. *The U.S. Maritime Strategy*, Jane's, London, 1988.
- , *The Naval Institute Guide to World Naval Weapons, 1997-99*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1997.
- Funabashi, Yoichi. *Alliance Adrift*, Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 1999.
- Giffard, Sydney. *Japan Among the Powers 1890-1990*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1994.
- George, Aurelia. *The Nakasone Challenge: Historical Constraints and New Initiatives in Japan's Defence Policy*, Legislative Research Service, The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, Discussion Paper No. 2, Canberra, 1987.
- Goralski, Robert and Freeburg, Russell, W. *Oil & War: How the Deadly Struggle for Fuel in WWII Meant Victory or Defeat*, William Morrow and Company Inc., New York, 1987.
- Gray, Colin S. *The Leverage of Sea Power: The Strategic Advantages of Navies in War*, The Free Press, New York, 1992.
- Green, Michael J. *Arming Japan: Defense Production, Alliance Politics and the Postwar Search for Autonomy*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1995.

- Griffiths, Ann L., Thomas, Robert H., Haydon, Peter T. (eds.). *The Changing Strategic Importance of International Shipping*, Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1998.
- Grove, Eric J. (ed.). *The Defeat of the Enemy Attack on Shipping, 1939-1945: A Revised Edition of the (1957) Naval Staff History Volumes 1A (Text and Appendices) and 1B (Plans and Tables)*, The Navy Records Society/Ashgate Publishing Limited, Aldershot, 1997.
- Hamzah, Ahmad (ed.). *The Straits of Malacca: International Co-operation in Trade, Funding and Navigational Safety*, Maritime Institute of Malaysia/Pelanduk Publications, Kuala Lumpur, 1997.
- Hamzah, Ahmad and Ogawa Akira (eds.). *Combating Piracy*, The Okazaki Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 2001.
- Hook, Glen. *Militarization and Demilitarization in Contemporary Japan*, Routledge, London and New York, 1996.
- Hoyt, Edwin P. *The Militarists: The Rise of Japanese Militarism Since WWII*, Donald I. Fine, New York, 1985.
- , *Three Military Leaders: Togo, Yamamoto, Yamashita*, Kodansha International, Tokyo, 1993; Parts I and II.
- Jukes, Geoffrey. *Russia's Military and the Northern Territories Issue*, SDSC Working Paper No. 227, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1993.
- Kahn, Herman. *Japan: The Emerging Superstate*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, 1970.
- Katahara, Eichi. *The Politics of Japanese Defence Policy Making, 1975-1989*, unpublished PhD thesis, Griffith University, Brisbane, 1990.
- Kataoka, Tetsuya. *Waiting for a "Pearl Harbor": Japan Debates Defense*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 1980.
- Katzenstein, Peter J. *Cultural Norms and National Security: Police and Military in Postwar Japan*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1996.
- Katzenstein, Peter J. and Okawara, Nobuo. *Japan's National Security: Structures, Norms and Policy Responses in a Changing World*, Cornell East Asia Series, Ithaca, 1993.
- Kawamura, Sumihiko, Adm. MSDF (Retd). *The Kawamura Papers*, The Kawamura Institute, Chiba, Japan, November 1998.



- Keal, Paul. *Japan's Role in United States Strategy in the Pacific*, Canberra Working Paper No. 106, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1986.
- Keddell, Joseph P., Jr. *The Politics of Defense in Japan: Managing Internal and External Pressures*, M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York, 1994.
- Kennedy, Malcolm J. and O'Connor, Michael J. *Safely By Sea*, University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland, 1990.
- Kenny, Henry J. *An Analysis of Possible Threats to Shipping in Key Southeast Asian Sea Lanes*, Center for Naval Analyses Occasional Paper, Alexandria, Virginia, February 1996.
- Kissinger, Henry. *The White House Years*, Hodder and Stoughton, Sydney, 1979.
- Koh, Kheng Lian. *Straits in International Navigation: Contemporary Issues*, Oceana Publications, London, 1982.
- Komer, Robert. *Maritime Strategy or Coalition Defense?*, University Press of America/Abt Books, Lanham, Maryland, 1984.
- Lehman, John F. Jr. *Command of the Sea*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1988.
- Leifer, Michael. *International Straits of the World: Malacca, Singapore and Indonesia*, Sijthoff and Noordhoff, The Netherlands, 1978.
- Levin, Norman D. *Japan's Changing Defense Posture*, Rand Note N-2739-OSD, June 1988.
- Levin, Norman D., Lorell, Mark and Alexander, Arthur. *The Wary Warriors: Future Directions in Japanese Security Policies*, Rand, Santa Monica, 1993.
- McCormack, Gavan (ed.). *Peace and Regional Security in the Asia-Pacific: A Japanese Proposal*, Peace Research Centre, Working Paper, No. 158, The Australian National University, Canberra, September 1995.
- MccGwire, Michael. *Australia as a Regional Seapower: an External View*, SDSC Working Paper No.11, Australian National University, Canberra, 1979.
- Maeda, Tetsuo. *The Hidden Army: the Untold Story of Japan's Military Forces*, Edition Q, Inc., Chicago, 1995.
- Mahan, Alfred T. *The Influence of Seapower Upon History, 1660-1783*, first published 1890, First American Century Series Edition, Hill and Wang, New York, 1957.
- Maswood, Javed S. *Japanese Defence: the Search for Political Power*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Allen and Unwin, Singapore, 1990.

- Matsumae, Tatsuro. *The Limits of Defense: Japan as an Unsinkable Aircraft-Carrier*, Tōkai University Press, 1988.
- Mendl, Wolf. *Japan's Asia Policy: Regional Security and Global Interests*, Routledge, London and New York, 1995.
- Mitsuhisa, Masahiko. *Defense Policy of Japan: Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, MA Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey / US Department of Commerce National Technical Information Service, March 1995.
- Mochizuki, Mike. *Japan: Domestic Change and Foreign Policy*, National Defense Research Institute/RAND, Santa Monica, 1995.
- Murai, Shigeru. *Shiiren: Umi no Bōisen* ('Sea Lanes: Defence Lines of the Sea'), NHK, Tokyo, 1983.
- Nakamura, Takafusa. *Lectures on Modern Japanese Economic History: 1926-1994*, originally published in 1986 under the title *Showa Keizai Shi* ('A History of the Showa Economy'), LTCB International Library Foundation, 1994.
- Nariai, Osamu. *History of the Modern Japanese Economy*, Foreign Press Center, Japan, Tokyo, 1997.
- Nish, Ian (ed.). *Anglo-Japanese Naval Relations: Papers by Kiyoshi Ikeda, Ian Gow, John Chapman, Chit-chung Ong*, International Studies 1985/3, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, 1985.
- Nishimura, Shigeki. 'Transformation of the U.S.-Japan Defense Posture: The New Soviet Challenge', International Institute for Global Peace (IIGP) Policy Paper, October 1991.
- Noer, John, H. with Gregory, David. *Chokepoints: Maritime Economic Concerns in Southeast Asia*, National Defense University Press/Center for Naval Analyses, Washington D.C., 1996.
- Nomura, Minoru. *Kaisen Shi ni Manabu* ('Learning from the History of War at Sea'), Bungei Shunju, Tokyo, 1994.
- Oga, Ryōhei. *Shiiren no Himitsu* ('Sea Lane Secrets'), Shōbunsha, Tokyo, 1983.
- Okazaki Hisahiko. *A Grand Strategy for Japanese Defense*, Abt Books/University Press of America, Lanham, Maryland, 1986.
- Parillo, Mark P. *The Japanese Merchant Marine in World War II*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, 1993.



- Polomka, Peter. *Japan as Peacekeeper: Samurai State, or New Civilian Power?*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 97, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1992.
- Purrington, Courtney Allen. *Governing an Alliance: The Political Economy of the Japan-U.S. Security Relationship*, PhD Thesis, Harvard University, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1993.
- Pyle, Kenneth B. *The Japanese Question: Power and Purpose in a New Era*, The AEI Press, Washington D.C., 1996.
- Ross, Robert, S. *Managing A Changing Relationship: China's Japan Policy in the 1990s*, U.S. Army War College, September 1996.
- Sakanaka, Tomohisa. *Alternative Force Structure of Japan's Self Defence Force*, unpublished draft report, June 1977.
- Sekai Keizai Johou Service. *Japanese-American Relations and Comprehensive Security*, Research Institute for Peace and Security, Tokyo, 1986.
- Sen Gupta, Bhabani, Poullose, T.T., Bhatia, Hemlata. *The Malacca Straits and the Indian Ocean: A Study of the Strategic and Legal Aspects of a Controversial Sea-lane*, Macmillan, New Delhi, 1974.
- Stockwin, J. A. Arthur. *Governing Japan*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1999.
- Sudo, Sueo. *Southeast Asia in Japanese Security Policy*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, 1991.
- Toland, John. *The Rising Sun: The Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire*, Bantam Books, New York, 1970.
- Tsurutani, Taketsugu. *Japanese Policy and East Asian Security*, Praeger, New York, 1981.
- Valencia, Mark J. *Northeast Asia: Transnational Navigational Issues and Possible Cooperative Responses*, University of California Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, IGCC Policy Paper 33.
- Vertzberger, Yaacov Y.I. *Coastal States, Regional Powers, Superpowers and the Malacca-Singapore Straits*, Institute of East Asian Studies Research Paper, University of California, 1984.
- Watanabe, Akio (ed.). *Sengo Nihon no Shushōtachi* ('Japan's Postwar Prime Ministers'), Chuō Kōronsha, Tokyo, 1995.
- Watkins, Admiral James D, *The Maritime Strategy*, The US Naval Institute, US Department of Defense, February 1986.

- Weinstein, Martin. *Japan's Postwar Defence Policy*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1971.
- Welfield, John. *An Empire in Eclipse: Japan in the Postwar American Alliance System: A Study in the Interaction of Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy*, The Athlone Press, London and Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, 1988.
- Wells, Linton, II. *The Sea and Japan's Strategic Interests 1975-1985*, John Hopkins University PhD thesis, Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1975.
- Winton, John. *Convoy: The Defence of Sea Trade 1890-1990*, Michael Joseph, 1983.
- Woolley, Peter J. *Japan's Navy: Politics and Paradox, 1971-2000*, Lynne Reiner, Boulder, 2000.
- You, Ji. *The Armed Forces of China*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1999.

**Book chapters, journal articles and conference papers.**

- Abhyankar, Jayant. 'Piracy and Ship Robbery: A Growing Menace', in Hamzah and Ogawa (eds.). *Combating Piracy*, The Okazaki Institute, Kuala Lumpur, 2001, pp 10-59.
- , 'An Overview of Piracy Problems: A Global Update', Society of International Law, Singapore (SILS) Piracy Seminar' October 22, 1999, Singapore: [www.sils.org/seminar/1999-piracy-02.htm](http://www.sils.org/seminar/1999-piracy-02.htm).
- Akaha, Tsuneo. 'Japan's Response to Threats of Shipping Disruptions in Southeast Asia and the Middle East', *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 2, Summer 1986, pp 255-277.
- , 'Japan's Comprehensive Security Policy', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 31, No. 4, April 1991, pp 324-340.
- Akimoto Kazuhisa. 'Re-routing Options and Consequences: Safeguarding Seaborne Trade in Straits and Archipelagic Regimes', Conference paper given at the 13th International Conference on Sea Lines of Communications, Canberra, April 2001.
- , 'Mission and Contribution of the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force in the Post-Cold War and EEZ Era', paper prepared for the International Conference sponsored by the Korean Institute for Maritime Strategy, December 11, 1998.



-----, 'OPK (Ocean-Peace Keeping): Multilateral Naval Cooperation for Ocean Stabilization', in *Ocean Governance and OPK: The Thirteenth International Symposium Proceedings*, National Institute for Defense Studies, Tokyo, 1998, pp 16-23.

Asanuma, Hirosato. 'Jōhō no Tōtaru Shiisutemu ga Fukaketsu' ('Total System of Intelligence is Indispensable'), On the Sea-Lane Defense Problem in Dispute No. 1, *Sekai no Kansen* ('Ships of the World'), December 1982, pp 126-129.

Auer, James E. 'Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force: An Appropriate Maritime Strategy?', *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 24, No.4, December 1971, pp 3-20.

Berger, Thomas U. 'From Sword to Chrysanthemum: Japan's Culture of Anti-militarism', *International Security*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Spring 1993), pp 119-150.

Blouin, J, Vice-Admiral, USN. 'Convoy or Defended Lanes', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, August 1989, pp 53-58.

Booth, Ken. 'The Role of Navies in Peacetime: The Influence of Future History on Sea Power', in 'Navies in Future Conflicts', in Anthony Bergin and Hugh Smith (eds.), 'Naval Power in the Pacific: Toward the Year 2000', Lynne Reiner, Boulder, 1993, pp 145-62.

-----, 'The New World Order' and the Future of Naval Power', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, November 1991, pp 17-27.

Bouchard, Joseph, F. and Hess, Douglas J. 'The Japanese Navy and Sea-Lanes Defense', *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, Vol. 110. No. 973, March 1984, pp 89-96.

Boutilier, James A. 'Air Defence of Merchant Ships', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, Vol. 15, No. 3, August 1989, pp 39-51.

Buzan, Barry. 'Japan's Defence Problematique', *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 8, No.1, 1995, pp 25-43.

- Buzan, Barry and Segal, Gerald. 'Rethinking East Asian Security', *Survival*, Vol. 36, No. 2, Summer 1994, pp 3-21.
- Chan, Steve. 'Humanitarianism, Mercantilism, or Comprehensive Security? Disbursement Patterns of Japanese Foreign Aid', *Asian Affairs*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Spring 1992, pp 10-14.
- Chuma, Kiyofuku. 'The 1986-90 Defense Plan: Does It Go Too Far?', *Japan Quarterly* Vol. 33 No. 1 Jan-April 1986, pp 13-18.
- Coulter, Daniel. 'Hub Ports and Focal Points: New Entrants in the Maritime Security Lexicon' in Griffiths, Ann L., Thomas, Robert H., Haydon, Peter T. (eds.). *The Changing Strategic Importance of International Shipping*, Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1998, pp 135-145.
- , 'The Economics of SLOC Protection; an Overvalued Mission', Eleventh International Conference on the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC) Studies, Tokyo, November 17-18, 1997.
- Cronin, Patrick M. and Yamaguchi, Noboru, 'Japan's Future Regional Security Role', *Strategic Review*, Summer 1992, pp 16-22.
- Cronin, Richard P. 'Japan's Expanding Role and Influence in the Asia Pacific Region: Implications for US Interests', *Current Politics and Economics of Japan*, Vol. 3 No. 2/3, 1993, pp 105-166.
- Cunanan, Carlito Y. Rear Adm. AFP. 'Foreign Access to National Bases: An Essential Aspect of the Regional Security of the Sea Lanes of Communication', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, May 1989, pp 57-60.
- Donohue, Hector J. 'Protection of Sea Lines of Communications -- Potential for Regional Co-operation in the Western Pacific', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, May 1990, pp 57-64.



- Dornan, James E. and Dornan, Diane S. 'Japan: Domestic Factors', in James M. Roherty (ed.), *Defense Policy Formation: Towards Comparative Analysis*, University of South California, 1980, pp 195-226.
- Doshita, Tetsuro, Lt Cdr (MSDF). 'Regional Security Links Japan and US', US Naval Institute *Proceedings*, March 1995, pp 51-54.
- Er, Lam Peng. 'Japan and the Spratlys Dispute: Aspirations and Limitations', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 36, October 1996, pp 995-1010.
- Eto, Shinkichi. 'Japanese Perception of National Threats', in Charles Morrison (ed.) *Threats to Security in East Asia-Pacific*, Pacific Forum/Lexington Books, Lexington Massachusetts, 1983. pp 53-64.
- , 'China and Sino-Japanese Relations in the Coming Decades', *Japan Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 10, Number 1 (Winter) 1996, pp 16-34.
- Garrett, Banning and Glasser, Bonnie. 'Chinese Apprehensions About Revitalization of the U.S.-Japan Alliance', *Asian Survey*, Vol. 37, No. 4. April 1997, pp 383-402.
- Goto Moto, 'Japan in Asia', *Japan Quarterly*, October-December 1969, Vol. 26. No. 4, pp 390-391.
- Gow, Ian. 'Civil-Military Relations in Contemporary Japan -- Civilian Control of Whose Military?', *The Japan Society*, Vol. 136 (Winter) 2001, pp 5-13.
- Green, Michael J. and Nagashima Akihisa. 'Key Areas to Watch In Japan-U.S. Security Relations', *Japan Quarterly*, January-March 1999, pp 17-22.
- Green, Michael J. and Murata, Koji. *The 1978 Guidelines for the U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation: Process and the Historical Impact*, Working Paper No. 17, September 2000; at [www.hfni.gsehd.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/japan/GreenMurataWP.htm](http://www.hfni.gsehd.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/japan/GreenMurataWP.htm).

- Green, Michael J. and Self, Benjamin L. 'Japan's Changing China Policy: From Commercial Liberalism to Reluctant Realism', *Survival*, Vol. 38, No. 2, Summer 1996, pp 35-58.
- Grove, Eric. 'Navies in Future Conflicts', in Anthony Bergin and Hugh Smith (eds.), *Naval Power in the Pacific: Toward the Year 2000*, Lynne Reiner, Boulder and London, 1993, pp 163-173.
- Guoxing, Ji. *SLOC Security in the Asia Pacific*, Center Occasional Paper, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu, February 2000 at: [www.apcss.org/Paper\\_SLOC\\_Occasional.htm](http://www.apcss.org/Paper_SLOC_Occasional.htm).
- Hamzah, B.A. 'The Security of Sealanes: The Search for an Equitable Straits Regime', *Asian Defence Journal*, June 1993, pp 6-12.
- Hellmann, Donald C. 'Japan and America in East Asia in the Wake of the Cold War' in Armand Clesse, Takashi Inoguchi, E.B. Keehn and J.A.A. Stockwin (eds.), *The Vitality of Japan: Sources of National Strength and Weakness*, St Antony's Press, Oxford, 1997, pp 180-93.
- Izumi, Hajime. 'Improvement of the National Defense Strategy and Defence Buildup Plans for Post-Cold War Japan', '93, International Defense Academic Seminar, Korea National War College, November 2, 1993, pp 53-67.
- Harris, Stuart and Cooper, Richard N. 'The U.S.-Japan Alliance' in *America's Asian Alliances*, Robert Blackwill and Paul Dibb (eds.), MIT Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 2000.
- Hill, J.R. Rear Admiral RN. "Maritime Strategy for Medium Powers" *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, May 1988, pp 37-45.



Hinton, Harold C. 'The United States and Extended Security Commitments: East Asia', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, No. 457, September 1981, p 99.

Hirama, Yoichi, Rear Adm., MSDF (Retd). 'The Growing Chinese Navy and its Influence on Triple-Relation (sic) – Japan, US and Korea', paper given at Conference on Post-Unification Security Cooperation Among the United States, Korea and Japan, Hawaii, April 20-23, 1998.

-----'. 'Japanese Professor on China's Navy Strategy', *Sekai no Kansen*, August 1996, pp 82-85.

Hiramatsu, Shigeo. 'The Chinese Navy and the Revival of 'Sinocentrism'', *Shin Bōei Ronshū* (Journal of National Defence), Vol. 20, No. 3 (December 1992), pp 16-37.

-----'. 'China's Naval Advance: Objectives and Capabilities', *Japan Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 8 No. 2 (Spring 1994), pp 118-32.

Hughes, Christopher W. 'Japan's Aum Shinrikyo, the Changing Nature of Terrorism, and the Post-Cold War Security Agenda', *Pacific Review*, Vol. 10, No. 1, February 1998, p 39-60.

-----'. 'The North Korean Nuclear Crisis and Japanese Security', *Survival*, Vol. 38, No. 2, Summer 1996, pp 389-415.

Inoguchi, Takashi. *Japan's International Relations*, Pinter, London, 1991.

International Institute of Strategic Studies. 'Japan's naval power: responding to new challenges', *Strategic Comments*, Vol. 6, October 2000.

Israeli, Raphael. 'The Three Lakes in Japan's Strategy in East and Southeast Asia', *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 24, No. 5, August 2000, pp 987-1003.

Johnson, Chalmers. 'Go-Banken-Sama Go Home' *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, July/August 1996, pp 22-29.

Kaihara (sometimes 'Kaibara') Osamu. 'Jissai Mondai to shite Fukanō' ('Such a Mission is far beyond Japan's Power'), On the Sea-Lane Defense Problem in Dispute No. 2, *Sekai no Kansen* ('Ships of the World'), December 1982, pp 130-133.

Katahara Eichi. 'Japan's Concept of Comprehensive National Security in the Post-Cold War World' in Susan L. Shirk and Christopher P. Twomey (eds.), *Power and Prosperity: Economics and Security Linkages in Asia-Pacific*, Transaction, New Brunswick, 1996.

Kawamura, Sumihiko, Adm. MSDF (Retd). 'SLOC Security – A Japanese Perspective', in Sam Bateman and Stephen Bates (eds.), *The Seas Unite: Maritime Cooperation in the Asia Pacific Region*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 118, Australian National University, Canberra, 1996, pp 165-167.

-----, 'International Cooperation for SLOC Security', Twelfth International Conference on the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC) Studies, Seoul, April 6-7, 1999.

Kawano, Katsutoshi. Capt. MSDF, 'Japan's Military Role: Alliance Recommendations for the Twenty-First Century', *Naval War College Review*, August 1998, Vol. 51, No. 4, pp 9-21.

Kitaoka, Shinichi. 'The Case for a Stronger Security Treaty', *Japan Echo*, Summer 1996, pp 68-75.

Kojima, Tomoyuki. 'Sino-Japanese Relations: A Japanese Perspective', *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spring/Summer) 1996, pp 73-105.

Kondo, Shigekatsu. 'The Maritime Priorities of Japan', in *Maritime Change: Issues for Asia*, Sam Bateman and Ross Babbage (eds.), Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 1993, pp 141-149.

Kosaka, Masataka. 'Japan's Major Interests and Policies in Asia and the Pacific', *Orbis*, Vol. 24, No. 3, Fall 1975, pp 793-808.



-----, 'Diplomacy and Security in the Twenty-first Century', *Japan Echo*, Winter 1996, pp 60-69.

Laxton, I.T. Lt Cdr (RAN). 'Creeping Jurisdiction in Southeast Asia: Its effect on Naval Mobility', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, May 1988, pp 4-9.

Leong, Teh Kong. *The Revolving Fund -- A Unique Facility*, Paper given at the International Conference on the Strait of Malacca: Meeting the Challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Malaysian Institute of Maritime Affairs, Kuala Lumpur, June 14-15, 1994.

MccGwire, Michael. 'The Geopolitical Importance of Strategic Waterways in the Asian-Pacific Regional', *Orbis*, Vol. 19, No. 3, Fall 1975, pp 1058-1076.

Malik, Mohan. 'Japan Wary of Assertive China', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, December 2000, pp 22-25.

Manning, Robert. 'Sino-Japanese Relations', *The Washington Quarterly*, Volume 17, No. 1, Winter 1994, pp 45-58.

Martin, Edward L. Cdr. USN. 'The Evolving Missions and Forces of the JMSDF', *Naval War College Review*, Spring 1995, Vol. 48 No. 2, pp 39-67.

Matsukane, Hisamoto. 'Japan and Security of the Sea Lanes', *Global Affairs*, (Spring): 1989, pp 49-64.

Mochizuki, Mike. 'Toward a New Japan-U.S. Alliance', *Japan Quarterly*, July-September 1996, pp 4-16.

Mochizuki, Mike and O'Hanlon, Michael. 'A Liberal Vision for the US-Japanese Alliance', *Survival*, Summer 1998, pp 127-134.

Nakamura, K. Cdr. MSDF. 'Strategic Influence of JMSDF', *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, March 1994, p 82.

Nelsen, Harvey. 'Japan Eyes China', *Journal of Northeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 4, (Winter) 1995, pp 81-90.

Niksich, Larry A. 'Defence Burden-Sharing in the Pacific: US expectations and Japanese Responses', *Asian Affairs*, July/August, 1981, pp 333-334.

-----, *Japan's Defense Policy*, Japan's Economic Challenge, Japan Economic Committee, October 1990 at [www.gwjapan.com.ftp/pub/policy/jec/jec6-1.txt](http://www.gwjapan.com.ftp/pub/policy/jec/jec6-1.txt)

Nishijima, Ryoichi. 'Participation of Maritime Self-Defense Forces in RIMPAC', *Asia Pacific Community*, No. 7, Winter 1980, pp 43-53.

Nye, Joseph S. 'China's Re-emergence and the Future of the Asia-Pacific', *Survival*, Vol. 39, No. 4, Winter 1997-98, pp 65-79.

Okazaki, Hisahiko. 'China: A Function of the Japan-US Alliance', *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spring/Summer) 1996, pp 45-50.

-----, 'In Anticipation of an Animated Discussion', January 27, 1998, [www.glocomnet.or.jp/okazaki-inst/sealane.okazaki.e.html](http://www.glocomnet.or.jp/okazaki-inst/sealane.okazaki.e.html).

Ouchi, Kazuomi. 'Making the Straits Safer: A User's View of Alternative Routes', paper given at the International Conference on the Strait of Malacca: Meeting the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Malaysian Institute of Maritime Affairs, June 14-15, 1994.

Park, Young-Kyu. 'Organizational Structures for SLOC Security in Northeast Asia', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, May 1990, pp 36-45.

Peattie, Mark R. 'Akiyama Saneyuki and the Emergence of Modern Japanese Naval Doctrine', *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, January 1977, pp 61-69.

Poirier, Michael LCDR, USN. 'Sea Control and Regional Warfare', *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, July 1993, pp 63-65.

Priestnall, Graham. 'ANZUS and the Radford-Collins Agreement: Australia's naval mission', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, January/March 1997, pp 49-52.

Purrington, Courtney. 'Tokyo's Policy Response During the Gulf War', *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. 65, 1992, pp 161-181.



- Sakhuja, Vijay. 'Maritime Order and Piracy', *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 24, No.5 August 2000, pp 923-939.
- Sakurada, Daizo. 'Why We Need the US-Japan Security Treaty', *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 5 No. 1, Spring/Summer 1998, pp 13-38.
- Sato, Ichiro. 'The Naval Policy of Japan', *Brassey's Naval and Shipping Annual*, 1927, William Clowes and Sons, London, 1927, pp 71-80.
- Sato, Seizaburo. 'Clarifying the Right of Collective Self-Defense', *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 3 No. 2, Fall/Winter 1996, pp 91-107.
- Sekino, Hideo, Commander, Imperial Japanese Navy (Retd). 'Japan and Her Maritime Defense', *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, May 1971, Vol. 97, No. 819, pp 98-121.
- Shearer, Ivan. 'Current Law of the Sea Issues', in *Maritime Change: Issues for Asia*, Sam Bateman and Ross Babbage (eds.), Allen and Unwin, 1993, pp 47-69.
- Shikata, Toshiyuki. 'Japan's Security Strategy: Meeting the Needs of a New Era', *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Spring/Summer) 1996, pp 51-72.
- , 'Redefinition of the Security Setup', *Japan Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 4, Fall 1996, pp 291-313.
- Shilling, David. 'A Reassessment of Japan's Naval Defense Needs' *Asian Survey*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (March 1976), pp 216-229.
- Shinkichi, Eto. 'Japanese Perceptions of National Threats', in Charles E. Morrison (ed.), *Threats to Security in East Asia-Pacific: National and Regional Perspectives*, Pacific Forum/Lexington Books, Washington D.C., 1983, pp 53-64.
- Soeya Yoshihide. 'Islands of Contention', *Look Japan*, May 1993.
- , 'The South China Sea: A Japanese Perspective', in *Security Implications of Conflict in the South China Sea: Perspectives from the Asia-Pacific*, Carolina Hernandez (ed.), Proceedings of the First International Conference on the South China Sea, Manila, November 12-14, 1995, Pacific Forum/CSIS and Institute for Strategic and Development Studies, Quezon City, 1997, pp 128-134.

- , 'The Japan-U.S. Alliance in a Changing Asia', *Japan Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 4, Fall 1996, pp 265-275.
- , 'Japan: Normative Constraints Versus Structural Imperatives', in 'Asia Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences', Muthiah Alagappa (ed.), Stanford University Press, 1998, pp 198-233.
- Stockwin, J.A. Arthur. 'Politics Japanese Style: Change or Continuity?' *Pacific Research*, May 1996, pp 3-5.
- Subijakto, Maj. Gen. 'Indonesia's Perception of SLOC in Southeast Asia', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, November 1989, pp 27-31.
- Swinerton, Russ. 'A Description of Regional Shipping Routes: Navigational and Operational Considerations', *Maritime Studies*, No. 87, March/April, 1996, pp 10-22.
- Tanaka, Akihiko. 'Japan's Security Policy in the 1990s, in Funabashi Yoichi (ed.) *Japan's International Agenda*, New York University Press, New York, 1994, pp 28-56.
- , 'A Model for Japanese Security in the Twenty-first Century', *Japan Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 10, No. 4, Fall 1996, pp 276-290.
- Taoka, Shunji. '21 Seiki Higashi Ajia no Senryaku Kankyo', ('East Asia's Strategic Environment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'), *Sekai no Kansen*, December 1995, No. 504, pp 70-75.
- Terashima, Hiroshi. 'The Role of NGOs in Dealing with Piracy at Sea', Society of International Law, Singapore (SILS) Piracy Seminar' Friday, October 22, 1999, Orchard Hotel, Singapore. [www.sils.org/seminar/1999-piracy-09.htm](http://www.sils.org/seminar/1999-piracy-09.htm).
- , 'Ajia no Umi to Kaizoku no Kyōi' ('Asia's Seas and the Piracy Threat'), *Gaikō Foramu*, No 156, July 2001, pp 38-41.
- Till, Geoffrey. 'China and Japan: America's Search for Allies', *Armed Forces*, Vol. 4 No. 9, 1985, pp 338-342.
- Tsai, Michael, M. and Chen, York W. 'Submarines and Taiwan's Defense', *Taiwan Defense Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Spring 2001, pp 122-177.
- Tsunoda, Jun. 'Japanese Security Problems and Perspectives in the Late 1970s', *Orbis*, Vol. 24, No. 3, Fall 1975, pp 874-886.



- Tsurutani, Taketsugu. 'Japan: The Security Debate', in James M. Roherty (ed.), *Defense Policy Formation: Towards Comparative Analysis*, University of South California, 1980. pp 175-194.
- Twomey, Christopher P. 'Japan, A Circumscribed Balancer', *Security Studies*, Vol. 9 No. 4, Summer 2000, pp 167-205.
- Uchida, Kazutomi. Adm. MSDF (Retd). 'Naval Competition and Security in East Asia' in Jonathan Alford (ed.). *Sea Power and Influence: old issues and new challenges*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, Farnborough, 1980, pp 104-109.
- Valencia, Mark J. 'Energy and Insecurity in Asia', *Survival*, Vol. 39, No. 3, Autumn 1997, pp 85-106.
- Victor, B.R.. 'Denial of Passage Rights in the Indonesian Archipelago -- Australian Implications', *Journal of the Australian Naval Institute*, February 1994, pp 41-50.
- Waters, D.W. 'Japan -- Defeat through Blockade - 1941-45', *The Naval Review*, Vol. 76, No.3, July 1988, pp 246-247.
- Weeks, Stanley. 'Law and Order at Sea: Pacific Cooperation in Dealing with Piracy, Drugs and Illegal Migration', in *Calming the Waters: Initiatives for Asia Pacific Cooperation*, Sam Bateman and Stephen Bates (eds.), Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 114, SDSC, Australian National University, 1996, Canberra, pp 43-56.
- Welfield, John. 'The American Japanese Alliance at the Turn of the Millennium', *Pacific Research*, May 1996, pp 6-11.
- Woolley, Peter J and Woolley, Mark S. 'Japan's Sea Lane Defense Revisited', *Strategic Review*, Fall 1996, pp 49-58.
- Wettern, Desmond. 'Ships, not lines, must be defended', *Pacific Defence Reporter*, 1989 Annual Reference Edition, pp 90-93.
- Yamaguchi, Noboru. 'Why the U.S. Marines Should Remain in Okinawa: a Military Perspective', in Ralph A. Cossa (ed.) *Restructuring the U.S.-Japan Alliance: Towards a More Equal Partnership*, The CSIS Press, Washington D.C. 1997, pp 98-110.
- Yamamoto, Makoto. Vice Adm (Ret) MSDF. 'Sealane in the Asia-Pacific Region Today and their Vulnerabilities', Eleventh International Conference on the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC) Studies, Tokyo, November 17-18, 1997.

Yoshida, Manabu. Adm (Ret) MSDF. Keynote Address, Eleventh International Conference on the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC) Studies, Tokyo, November 17-18, 1997.

**Official documents and reference sources.**

Advisory Group on Defense Issues. *The Modality of the Security and Defense Capability of Japan*, Japanese Government Translation, GM:3338-, August 12, 1994.

Asahi Shimbun. *Japan Almanac 1999*, Asahi Shimbunsha, Tokyo, 1998.

Asia Pacific Energy Research Centre. *Emergency Oil Stocks and Energy Security in the APEC Region*, APERC, Tokyo, March 2000.

Australian Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. *Japan's Defence and Security in the 1990s*, Senate Printing Unit, Canberra, 1992.

BBC Monitoring Summary of World Broadcasts, Asia Pacific.

Comprehensive National Security Study Group. *Report on Comprehensive National Security*, Japanese government translation, GE:118489, July 2, 1980.

Foreign Press Center, Japan. *Facts and Figures of Japan*, 1997 Edition, Foreign Press Center, Japan, Tokyo, 1997.

International Institute for Strategic Studies. *The Military Balance*, Brassey's, various editions.

International Maritime Bureau. *Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships: Annual Report 2001*, ICC International Maritime Bureau, Barking, January 2002.

Jane's. *Jane's Fighting Ships 1996-97*, Jane's, London, 1996.

Japan Defense Agency. *Defense of Japan*, Japan Defense Agency/Japan Times, Tokyo, (successive issues 1976-2001).

-----, *Waga Kuni ni okeru Bōeiryoku Seibi no Keika* ('Trends in Japan's Defence Equipment Build-up'), Internal JDA report, 1982.

The Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee. *Japanese Naval and Merchant Shipping Losses During World War II By All Causes*, Navy Department, Washington D.C., February 1947.

Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan. *Energy in Japan*, Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, September 2001.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan. *Diplomatic Bluebook*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan/Urban Connections, Tokyo, various issues.



- National Institute for Defense Studies. *East Asian Strategic Review*, National Institute for Defense Studies, Tokyo, successive issues 1996/97-2001.
- Special Study Group on Japan's Role in the International Community (Liberal Democratic Party). 'Japan's Role in the International Community' (Draft Report), February 1992, in *Japan Echo*, Summer 1992, pp 49-58.
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. *Review of Maritime Transport*, 2002, United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2002.
- United States Department of Defense. *Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China*, July 2002.
- United States Department of Defense. *The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region* (EASR 1995), U.S. Department of Defense, Washington D.C., February 1995.
- United States Department of Defense. *The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region* (EASR 1999), U.S. Department of Defense, Washington D.C. November 1998.
- United States Embassy, Tokyo, Political section, Translation Services Branch. *Daily Summary of the Japanese Press*, 1969-2002.
- United States Federal Research Division, Library of Congress. *Japan: A Country Study*, United States Federal Research Division, Library of Congress/Department of the Army, Washington D.C., 1992.

#### **Newspapers, magazines and journals.**

- Aera
- Armed Forces
- The Asahi Evening News
- Asahi Shimbun
- Asia Times
- Asian Defence Journal
- Asia-Pacific Community
- Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter (formerly Pacific Defence Reporter)
- Asia-Pacific Review
- Asian Survey

The Australian  
Aviation Week and Space Technology  
The Bangkok Post  
Current Politics and Economics of Japan  
The Daily Yomiuri  
Defender (The National Journal of the Australia Defence Association)  
Defense News  
The Economist  
Fairplay International Shipping Weekly  
The Far Eastern Economic Review  
The Financial Times  
Foreign Affairs  
Gaikō Foramu  
Gekkan Jadi  
Global Affairs  
The Hindu  
Hitotsubashi Journal of Law and Politics  
The International Herald Tribune  
International Security  
The Jakarta Post  
Jane's Defence Weekly  
Japan Echo  
Jane's Intelligence Review  
Japan Quarterly  
Japan of International Affairs  
The Japan Times  
Jiji Press Newswire  
Journal of the Australian Naval Institute  
Journal of Northeast Asian Affairs  
Kyodo  
Look Japan  
Mainichi Shimbun  
The Mainichi Daily News



The Manila Chronicle  
Naval Review  
Naval War College Review  
The New York Times  
Nihon Keizai Shimbun  
The Nikkei Weekly  
Orbis  
Pacific Affairs  
The Pacific Review  
The People's Daily  
Royal United Services Institute Journal  
Sea Power  
Securitarian  
Seiron  
Sekai no Kansen  
Shin Bōei Ronshū  
The Shipping Times  
Strategic Analysis  
Strategic Comments  
Strategic Review  
Strategic Survey  
Survival  
The Sydney Morning Herald  
Taiwan Defense Affairs  
Tokyo Shimbun  
U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings  
The Washington Post  
The Washington Quarterly  
Yomiuri Shimbun

**Online resources.**Official:

Japan Coast Guard:

[www.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/e/index\\_e.htm](http://www.kaiho.mlit.go.jp/e/index_e.htm)

Japan Defense Agency:

[www.jda.go.jp/e/index\\_.htm](http://www.jda.go.jp/e/index_.htm)

Japanese Embassy in India, press releases:

[www.japan-emb.org.in/pressreleases/Press\\_ReleasesMenu.htm](http://www.japan-emb.org.in/pressreleases/Press_ReleasesMenu.htm)

Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (formerly Ministry of International Trade and Industry):

[www.meti.go.jp/](http://www.meti.go.jp/)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan:

[www.mofa.go.jp/index.html](http://www.mofa.go.jp/index.html)

Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications:

[www.stat.go.jp](http://www.stat.go.jp)

US Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration:

[www.eia.doe.gov](http://www.eia.doe.gov)

Non-official:

Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu, February 2000

[www.apcss.org/Paper\\_SLOC\\_Occasional.htm](http://www.apcss.org/Paper_SLOC_Occasional.htm)

BP Amoco Statistical Review of World Energy:

[www.bp.com/centres/energy2002/oil/reserves.asp](http://www.bp.com/centres/energy2002/oil/reserves.asp)

International Chamber of Commerce Commercial Crime Services, International Maritime Bureau

[www.iccwbo.org/ccs/institutional/introduction.asp](http://www.iccwbo.org/ccs/institutional/introduction.asp)

The Japanese Shipowners' Association:

[www.jsanet.or.jp/index2.html](http://www.jsanet.or.jp/index2.html)

The Nippon Foundation and Piracy Database:

[www.nippon-foundation.or.jp/english/db01.nippon-foundation.or.jp/cgi-bin/zaidan/search\\_e.cgi](http://www.nippon-foundation.or.jp/english/db01.nippon-foundation.or.jp/cgi-bin/zaidan/search_e.cgi)

The Okazaki Institute:

[www.glocomnet.or.jp/okazaki-inst/okazaki-eng.html](http://www.glocomnet.or.jp/okazaki-inst/okazaki-eng.html)



Reuters Business Briefing:

[www.businessreuters.com](http://www.businessreuters.com)

University of Texas Online Map Collection:

[www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/)

### **Interviews.**

Adm. Akimoto Kazumine, MSDF (Retd), National Institute for Defense Studies, March 1, 1999, and Ship and Ocean Institute, Tokyo, March 4, 2002.

Mr Akiyama Masahiro, (former JDA Vice Administrative Vice-Minister) Chairman, Ship and Ocean Foundation, Nippon Foundation, Tokyo, March 4, 2002.

Mr Arima Jun, Director for International Energy Strategy, Ministry for Economy, Trade and Industry, Tokyo, February 28, 2002.

Mr Gary Eng, Team Leader, Asia Pacific Energy Research Centre (APEREC), Tokyo, March 5, 2002.

Commander Gotō Shinichi (CGSI-III), Deputy Director, International Affairs and Crisis Management Division, Japan Coast Guard, Tokyo, March 7, 2002.

Adm. Hirama Yoichi, MSDF (Retd), National Defense Academy, Yokosuka, March 16, 1999.

Mr Hoshuyama Noburo, (former JDA Director, Defense Facilities Administration Agency) Adviser, Kyoei Life Insurance, Tokyo, March 11, 1999.

Ms Imura Akiko, Deputy Director, International Division, Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, Ministry for Economy, Trade and Industry, Tokyo, February 28, 2002.

Mr Ito Kenichi, Mitsubishi Electric Corp, Tokyo, March 8, 1999.

Vice Adm. Kaneda Hideaki, MSDF (Retd), Senior Research Advisor for National Security, Mitsubishi Research Institute, Canberra, April 4, 2001.

Dr Katayama Yoshio, National Institute for Defense Studies, Tokyo, February, 1999.

Mr Sam Jameson, Tokyo, March 10, 1999.

Adm. Kawamura Sumihiko, MSDF (Retd), Okazaki Institute, March 1999 (various) and March 1, 2002.

Mr Manabe Ro, Japan Defense Agency, Tokyo, March 9, 1999.

Ambassador Murata Ryōhei, (former ambassador to the United States) Executive Director, Nippon Foundation, Toranomon, Tokyo, March 6, 2002.

Mr Nakamura Noriaki, Director, Office of Strategic Studies, Defense Policy Division,  
Defense Policy Bureau, Japan Defense Agency, Tokyo, February 1999.

Capt. Nakanishi Kenji, MSDF, Research Department, Maritime Staff College, Tokyo,  
March 4, 2002.

Prof. Nishihara Masashi, National Defense Academy, Yokosuka, March 1999.

Mr Nomura Eigo, Deputy Director, Equipment Coordination Division, Bureau of Finance  
and Equipment, Japan Defense Agency, Tokyo, March 1, 2002.

Ambassador Okazaki Hisahiko, Okazaki Institute, Tokyo, 1999, March 12, 1999.

Capt. Osuka Yoshihiro, Asst. General Manager, Marine Safety and Environmental Team,  
'K'-Line (Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha), Tokyo, February 28, 2002.

Capt. Otsuka Umio, MSDF, Agenda Coordinator, Western Pacific Naval Symposium, Plans  
and Program Division, Maritime Staff Office, Japan Defense Agency, Tokyo,  
March 1, 2002.

Prof. Sakanaka Tomohisa, President, Research Institute for Peace and Security, Tokyo,  
February 12, 1999.

Adm. Sakonjo Naotoshi, MSDF (Retd), Research Institute for Peace and Security, Tokyo,  
February 12, 1999 and March 5, 2002.

Gen. Shikata Toshiyuki, GSDF (Retd), Tokyo, March 7, 1999.

Adm. Soenardi, Republic of Indonesia Navy, Jakarta, March 11, 2000.

Prof. Tadokoro Masayuki, National Defense Academy, Yokosuka, March 7, 2002.

Mr Takamizawa Nobushige, Councillor, Cabinet National Security Affairs Office, Tokyo,  
March 1, 1999.

Mr Umemoto Kazuyoshi, Director, First International Organizations Division, Economic  
Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, February 1999.

Prof. Watanabe Akio, Aoyama Gakuin University, Tokyo 1999 (various) and President,  
Research Institute for Peace and Security, Tokyo, March 5, 2002.

Mr Yoshizaki Tomonori, National Institute for Defense Studies, Tokyo, March 4, 2002.

Confidential interview with JDA Operations Bureau official, March 5, 2002.